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RHYMES AND POEMS.


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RHYMES AND POEMS.

BY

ROBERT LEIGHTON.

SECOND EDITION.

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BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA
DIVINA
HUMANA
POLITICA

When after five brief years I read again
The little book I ventured on the age,
Humbled I meet along the straggling page
The weak and limping children of my pen.
And these are they I deem'd so perfect *then*!
Scarce one my disappointment to assuage!—
'Tis well: their imperfection stands a guage
That tells me I have deepen'd in my ken.—
There's little more comes to us when we seek
To make our old work a perpetual bay.
O, rather feel our yesterdays were weak,
E'en though we cannot better them to-day.
From work outgrown a higher thought we borrow;
And thought to-day will be a deed to-morrow.

PRELUDE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

Thou canst not hide thyself behind thy work;
It puts thee in front, so that man's eye,
Looking on it, sees thee. Truth will not lurk
Unseen in fair false words: thou canst not lie.
Therefore I say no word about my RHYMES,
But give them as they came—the latest last—
That he who deigns to listen to their chimes
May tell how wears the heart from which they pass'd.
O reader, if thou hear one heavenward peal
Amid the clang that is but earthly noise,
And if the echo from thy breast reveal
A kindred note, then will my heart rejoice.
I shall exult if thy approving look,
Bespeak a soul within my little book.

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ERRATA.

Page 41, line 13 from top, *for* thy *read* your.
Page 77, line 7 from bottom, *for* cauld *read* could.
Page 94, line 8 from bottom, *for* deal *read* dear.
Page 109, line 15 from bottom, *for* are *read* art.
Page 130, line 13 from top, *for* fell *read* feel.
Page 158, line 17 from top, *for* sea *read* tides.
Page 175, line 2 from top, *between* where *and* are *insert* we.

RHYMES AND POEMS.

THE LADDIE'S LAMENTATION ON THE LOSS O' HIS WHITTLE.

My Whittle's lost! Yet I dinna ken:
Lat's ripe—lat's ripe my pouch again.
Na! I hae turn'd ower a' that's in'd,
But ne'er a Whittle can I find :—
A bit cauk and a bit red keel—
The clamp I twisted aff my heel—
A bit auld shoe to mak' a sling—
A peerie, and a peerie a string—
The big auld button that I faund
When crossin' through the fallow land—
A bit lead and a puckle thrums—
And, last o' a', some ait-cake crumbs.

Yet aye I turn them o'er and o'er,
Thinkin' I'd been mista'en before;
And aye my hand, wi' instinctive ettle,
Gangs to my pouch to seek my Whittle.

I doot it's lost:—how, whar, and whan,
Is mair than I can understan';—
Whether it jamp out o' my pouch
That time I loupit ower the ditch,
Or whether I didna tak' it up
When I cut a handle for my whup,
Or put it in at the wrang slit,
And it fell through, doon at my fit.
But mony a gate I've been since then,
Ower hill and hallow, muir and fen,—
Outside, inside, butt and ben:
I doot I'll never see'd again!

Made o' the very best o' metal,
I thocht richt muckle o' my Whittle.
It aye cam' in to be o' use,
Whether out-by or in the hoose,—
For slicin' neeps, or whangs o' cheese,
Or cuttin' out my name on trees;
To whyte a stick or cut a string,
To mak' windmills or onything.
Wi' it I was richt whare'er I gaed,
And a' was wrang whan I didna ha'ed.
I ken na how I'll do withoot it;
And faith, I'm michty ill aboot it.
I micht as weel live wantin' vittle
As try to live withoot my Whittle.

Yon birkies scamperin' doon the road,—
I'd like to join the joysome crowd;
The very air rings wi' their daffin'—
Their rollickin', hallooin', laughin'!
Flee on, my lads, I'll bide my lane,
My heart hings heavy as a stane;
My feet seem tied to ane anither,
I'm clean dung doited a' thegither.
Hear, how they rant, and roar, and rattle!
Like me they hinna lost a Whittle.

It was the only thing o' worth
That I could ca' my ain on earth:
And aft I wad admeerin' stand,
Haudin' the Whittle in my hand,
Breathin' upon its sheenin' blade,
To see how quick the breath wad fade;
And weel I kent it wad reveal
The blade to be o' richt guid steel.

Puir Whittle! whar will ye be now?
In wood? on lea? on hill? in howe?
Lying a' cover'd ower wi' grass?
Or sinkin' doon in some morass?
Or may ye be already fund,
And in some ither body's hand?
Or will ye lie till, ruistit o'er,
Ye look like dug-up dirks of yore?
When we're a' dead and sound eneuch,
Ye may be turn'd up by the pleuch!
Or fund i' the middle o' a peat,
And sent to Edinbruch in state;
There to be shown—a wond'rous sicht—
The Jocteleg o' Wallace Wicht!

Thus, a' the comfort I can bring
Frae thee, thou lost, lamented thing,
Is to believe that, on a board,
Wi' broken spear, and dirk, and sword,
And shield, and helm, and ancient kettle,
May some day lie my ruisty Whittle.

PEASE BROSE.

The mighty earl of Eglinton,
With lords and ladies fair,
Over his wide domain has gone
To hunt the timid hare.

Over the lawns, and across the brooks,
And adown the rushy dells,
Through woods that ring with noisy rooks,
And along the clanging fells.

But a sudden storm o'erran the day
As they scour'd an open field;
And fain were they to bend their way
To a tenant's lowly bield.

As in beneath the sheltering sheds
The courtly riders wheel,
They come on a group of curly heads
Around their mid-day meal.

And some remark'd their sun-bleach'd hair,
And some their bright blue eyes;
But what the nature of their fare
No lordling could surmise.

Then turn'd they to the earl each one—
Not even his earlship knows.
"What's that you eat?" asked Eglinton.
They answer him "*Pease Brose.*"

"Pease Brose to dinner! brose alone!
With neither boil nor stew!
But say, what did you breakfast on?"
They answer, "*Pease Brose too.*"

"Such food for pigs were better fit!—
Yet say, my little men,
What kind of supper do you get?"—
"*O juist Pease Brose again.*"

"Pease Brose! and still again Pease Brose!
What does your father do
With all the oats and wheat he grows?
Eggs, cheese, and butter too?"

The eldest cried with half a frown,
As down his spoon he throws,
"That greedy sinner Eglinton
Leaves naething but *Pease Brose!*"

The red broke through the earl's pale face,
The blue broke through the day,
He spurr'd his charger to the chase,
And swiftly they rode away.

But the curly heads coursed in his mind—
For so the story goes—
And ever after that they dined
On better than *Pease Brose.*

THE WEE HERD LOON.

O that I were the wee herd loon
That basks upo' yon sunny lea!
Ilk ither wish I wad lay doon,
A laddie herdin' kye to be.

I'd lose the little lear I ha'e,
And learn the herdie's simple arts—
To build a housie 'mang the strae,
To mak' wee neep and twatie carts;

To mak' a kep o' rashies green,
  And learn the herdie's gleesome lauch,
To mak' a rattle to the wean,
  Or cut a whistle o' the sauch;

To licht a firie on the muir,
  That a' the herdies may sit doon;
Or set the whins on bleezin' fire,
  That a' the herdies may rin roun';

To plait a whup for drivin' kye,
  And learn the herdie's sangs to sing,
And wi' the herdie's hooin' cry,
  Gar a' the echoing woodlands ring;

To climb the green-wood trees sae high,
  And shogin' sit amang the boughs,
And watch the birdies flitting bye,
  Or mark the burnie as it rows;

To mak' wind-mills and water-wheels,
  To be ilk thing that's herdie like—
A wee thing fear'd at ghaists and deils,
  Or onie ither uncannie tyke;

Get shoon wi' clampit heels and taes,
  And five fu' rows o' muckle takets;
Corduroy and fustian claes,
  Wi' pouches fu' o' queer nick-nackets.

O! blythesome are the herdie's ways,
  I had a wee, wee tastin' o' them;
But Time's a flood that never stays—
  A flood that beats mankind to fathom—
It wafted me frae herdin' days
  Ere I was weel begun to know them.

JEAN.

The ither day doon by the burn,
Near whar it wanderin' tak's a turn,
I met, neat as a new-made preen,
A winsome lass—they ca' her Jean.

And since my heart first got the knell,
I've lo'ed her mair than words can tell·
A' ither joys I'd gie to ken
If Jeanie lo'ed me back again.

The burnies they may cease to row,
The gowans they may cease to grow,
They starns they a' may cease to sheene
Ere I can cease to think o' Jean.

O that we were twa streamlets clear,
And side by side gin we'd keep near,
Until our tracks a turnie taen
And made us twa row into ane!

THE GABERLUNZIE'S SONG.

There's some can be happy and bide whar they are,
There's ithers ne'er happy unless they gang far;
But aft do I think I'm an easy auld stock,
While I'm joggin' aboot wi' my muckle meal pock.

Though now I be auld, abune four score and aucht,
Though my pow it be bauld, and my craig be na straucht,
Yet frae mornin' till e'en—ay as steady's a rock—
I gang joggin' aboot wi' my muckle meal pock.

Juist our ain pairish roond, and nae mair I gang through,
And when at the end I begin it anew;
There isna' a door but wad blythly unlock,
To welcome me ben wi' my muckle meal pock.

There isna' a hoose but I micht mak my hame,
There isna' an auld wife wad think me to blame,
Though I open'd the door without gieing a knock,
And cam' ben to the fire wi' my muckle meal pock.

As ony newspaper they saw I'm as gweed,
And better, say some, for they hinna to read;
The lads and the lasses aroond me a' flock,
And there's no ane forgets that I hae a meal pock.

The gudeman he speaks aboot corn and lan',
"Hoo's the markets," says he, "are they risen or fawn?
Or is this snawie weather the roads like to chock?"—
But the gudewife aye spiers for my muckle meal pock.

To be usefu' to her I haud sticks on the fire,
Or when, to the milkin', she gangs to the byre,
She'll gie me a haud o' the cradle to rock,
And for that she's aye guid to my muckle meal pock.

Though my friends a' be gane whar I yet hae to gang—
And o' followin' them now I canna be lang—
Yet while I am here I will laugh and I'll joke,
For I'll aye find a friend in my muckle meal pock.

THE NICHT I PARTED FRAE MY MAGGIE.

O dreary was the gloamin' sky—
The lowerin' clouds were dark and raggie:
But duller, drearier was I
That nicht I parted frae my Maggie.

'Twas Sabbath nicht, the kirk was skelt,
And we were at the kirk-gate standin';
I kenna how my Maggie felt;
But O my heart was at the rendin'.

Her winsome looks, sae formed to move,
Made on my heart a deep impression;
I lang'd to tell her o' my love,
But couldna' mak' the sweet confession.

We parted and each hameward gaed;
Eerie thochts my brain were hauntin';
And O! at hame I couldna bide;
I felt as something wore awantin'.

Though drearier cam' on the nicht,
And though the drizzly rain was fallin',
I wandered out to get a sicht—
My henmost sicht—o' Maggie's dwellin'.

I gazed upo' the windows high,
A streamy licht was frae them shinin';—
Ah, she was in the licht, and I
Stood in the dark wet street, repinin'.

O had I haen the power to tell
How love was in my bosom swellin',
I micht been gazin' on hersel'
Instead o' glowerin' on her dwellin'.

Adieu, adieu, thou bonnie gem!
Fareweel, thou dewy-lippit blossom!
O could I pluck thee frae thy stem,
And plant thee here within my bosom!

The partin' tears that dim my e'e,
Will rattle doon my cheek to-morrow;
But where I sure she cared for me,
My hope wad soothe my present sorrow.

THE AULD WIFE'S LAMENT FOR HER COW.

O, wae's my heart puir Doddie's dead!
A better coo ne'er crapt the mead;
'Twas a' by her I wan my bread—
O the worthy beastie!

She baited by the green road-side,
Or by the burnie's wimplin' tide;
Wi' her I didna need to bide—
O the trusty beastie!

Content wi' thrissle, girse or thorn,
She wadna touch the mester's corn,
But luit it ripen and be shorn—
O the thochtfu' beastie!

She never haikit like a hund,
But keepit aye on hamely grund,
And never needit to be bund—
O the cannie beastie!

Nae horns had she, nor bell nor hawk,
But dark-broon sides and gowden back,
Her sonsie wame as white as cauk—
O the bonnie beastie!

Her milk like yellow cream distill'd,
Three times a-day the cog she filled,
And but a wee while gaed she yell'd—
O the usefu' beastie!

She was to me baith milk and bread,
But wae's my heart puir Doddie's dead,
And I may lay my weary head
Doon aside my beastie!

WIDOW SALMON'S PRAYER,

ON THE APPROACH OF RENT DAY.

Ye open-minded, if it be your will,
And if ye hae a wee, wee while to spare;
O dinna let your hearts be hard and chill,
But listen to auld Widow Salmon's prayer:—

Four score o' years I've been a dweller here,
And mony *ups* and mony *doons* I've seen;
I canna weel keep in the gatherin' tear
As aft I think on what I ance hae been.

The pomp o' riches never was my share;
But health and strength and happiness were mine:
A humble livin'—and I socht nae mair—
Was a' I got frae Providence divine.

The mornin's blush but flutters ower the sky,
The early dews but kiss and leave the lea;
Sae health and youth and happiness did fly,
And left me here to fecht wi' povertie.

There was a time—it ne'er will be again—
When I was strong and fit to win my bread;
Though willing yet to work, my strength is gane,
And I hae hardly where to lay my head.

The howlin' blast around my garret blaws,
And awsome shudders nightly o'er me creep!
The eerie wind comes whistlin' through the wa's,
And wi' its frichtsome crune disturbs my sleep.

My garret barely fends me frae the storm,
Yet wi' sma' comforts I am weel content;
But oh, I'll hae to leave it at the *Term*—
I dinna hae the means to pay the rent.

Ye feeling hearted, if it be your will,
O help me, if ye hae a mite to spare!
To meet the term-day it will beat my skill!
The paying o' my rent is a' my care!

O help me, while your helping is o' use—
I may na trouble you the next term day;
Soon, soon I'll leave my garret for a house
Of many mansions, and nae rent to pay.

MY MITHER'S GRAVE.

I wander'd out ae simmer's eve,
My mither's lanely grave to see;
My heart was dowie and did grieve;
The trembling tear stood in my ee.

Calm was the nicht—no e'en a breath
To fan the gowan on the lea;
At ither times I'd hae been laith,
But on that nicht I'd liked to dee.

Although the road was wild and lang,
I wander'd on and wasna' fear'd,
For on that nicht my heart was strong,
And bore me to yon auld kirkyard.

Weel did I ken whereat to look,—
Near by yon auld, yon stately yew,
Where, shelter'd in a lanely nook,
The grass was hoary white wi' dew.

The auld yew-tree seem'd ghastly mute;
I made its drooping branch my chair,
And, calm and saftly, on my flute,
Play'd ower my mither's favourite air.

Methocht the bended gravestanes rose,
The faulded flowrets open'd wide,
As up amang the yew-tree boughs
My mither's favourite tune did glide.

That was enough—that mournfu' tune
Tauld a' the yearnings o' my heart;
It made me think o' lands abune,
It made auld recollections start.

At length the cushat ceased to coo,
And gloamin' faded into gloom;
I mixed my tears amang the dew,
And laithfu' left my mither's tomb.

SIGNS O' RAIN.

Written when on a Pedestrian Tour with a Friend.

Now are we fresh and swank as eels,
And fit to walk a score o' miles;
And if the day wad but keep fair,
We'd tramp a score o' miles and mair.
But worms hae left the grassy sod
And streek themsel's out on the road;
And as they crawl they seem to say,
" My lads, beware o' rain the-day."

The far-aff hills creep near the toons,
And draw their mist-keps ower their croons;
Near seems the distant lammie's bleat;
Kye snuff the air and winna eat;
The swallows lowly skim the field;
The trees unusual fragrance yield:—
Hills, trees, kye, lambs, and swallows say,
" My lads, beware o' rain the-day.

SPUNK JANET'S CURE FOR LOVE.

I've vow'd to forget him again and again,
But vows are as licht as the air is, I trow,
For something within me aye comes wi' a sten'
And dunts on my heart till I gie up the vow.

I gaed to Spunk Janet, the spaewife, yestreen—
I've often heard folk o' her wisdom approve—
Quoth she, "It's your fortune you're wantin' I ween?"—
"Na! Janet," quoth I, "will ye cure me o' love?"

"I'll try it," quoth she, "say awa' wi' your tale,
And tell me the *outs* and *ins* o' it a';
Does love mak' ye lichtsome, or does't mak' ye wail?
Ye see, lass, I ken it does ane o' thae twa."

"Aweel then, to tell you the truth o' it, Janet,
There's sometimes I'm clean overflowin' wi' glee,
And ither times, woman, I'm no fit to stan' it,
Ye'd think I wad greet out the sicht o' my ee.

"But then there's the laddie, *I* never can get him,
And here am I ready and willin' to pay,
Gin ye'll play some *cantrip* to mak' me forget him—
The thochts o' him deave me by nicht and by day,"

"Ill e'en try my skill on't," quoth Janet, "I shall,—
The cost o' my counsel is but half-a-croon,—
However, i' th' first place, ye ken the Witch Walle,
That bonnie clear spring at the end o' the toon?

"When the sun frae his bed is beginnin' to teet,
Gang ye ilka mornin', blaw weet or blaw wind,
And sit by the wallie and dip in your feet,
Without e'er a thocht o' the lad in your mind.

"Do this for a week and the cure will be wrocht,—
But, mind ye, tak' care o' what comes in your head;
If e'er it should chance that *the lad* be your thocht,
Like mist o' the mornin' the cantrip will fade."

Thus ended Spunk Janet: I paid her the fee,
And by her directions I promised to bide:
To-morrow the *cantrip* begins, I maun be
By the first peep o' day at the Witch Wallie's side.

The cauld o' the water I weel may endure;
But then, there's *the thocht*, it's the warst o' it a':
For if ower the thochts o' my mind I had pow'r,
I wadna hae needed Spunk Janet ava.

FRAGMENT.

Much may be learn'd from friendship, more from love,
But what is learn'd from love can ne'er be told,
Save by the two who tell it to each other,—
A silent tale! it does not come in words,
For they were never meant to speak of love;
Though for that purpose they are often used
By those who do not breathe love's purest air,
Or those whose *eyes* of love could never speak—
Since there are eyes that have no tongue of fire.
But yet 'tis often seen, and noted oft,
That love gives speech unto the dumbest eye:
And I, though young in love, am of belief,
There never was an eye with lustre in't
Until it had the tale of love to tell.
So nature, ever kind, is kind in this:
Soon as the golden chain enslaves the heart,
There is a language given to the eyes,
Which plead the prisoner's cause with eloquence,
And love, with sighs and kisses, sets him free.

THE SNUFFIE AULD MAN.

By the cozie fire-side or the sun-ends o' gavels,
The snuffie auld bodie is sure to be seen.
Tap, tappin' his snuff box, he snifters and sneevils,
And smachers the snuff frae his mou' to his een.
Since tobacco cam' in and the snuffin' began
There hasna been seen sic a snuffie auld man.

His haurins are dozen'd, his een sair bedizen'd
And red round the lids as the gills o' a fish;
His face is a bladdit, his sark-breest a' smaddit—
As snuffie a picture as ony could wish.
He maks a mere merter o' a' thing he does,
Wi' snuff frae his fingers an' draps frae his nose.

And wow but his nose is a troublesome member—
Day and nicht there's nae end to its snuffie desire;
It's wide as the chimlie, it's red as an ember,
And has to be fed like a dry whinnie fire.
It's a troublesome member and gi'es him nae peace,
Even sleepin' or eatin' or sayin' the grace.

The kirk is disturb'd wi' his hauchin' and sneezin',
The dominie stoppit when leadin' the psalm;
The minister, deav'd out o' logic and reason,
Pours gall in the lugs that are gapin' for balm.
The auld folks look surly, the young chaps jocose,
While the bodie himsel' is bambazed wi' his nose.

He scrimps the auld wife baith in garnal and caddy,
He snuffs what wad keep her in comfort and ease;
Rapee, Lundyfitt, Prince's Mixture, and Taddy,—
She looks upon *them* as the warst o' her faes.
And we'll ne'er see an end o' her Rooshian war
While the auld carle's nose is upheld like a Czar.

TO MY UNCLE.

My uncle! hallowed name, revered, belov'd!
I cannot breathe it but, within my breast,
A speechless awe arises,—I am moved
With veneration deep—like one possess'd
With some high heavenly thought that is too great
For mind to grasp in this its earthly state.

O, uncle, I have learn'd to think of thee,
Not as of other men, but as I'd think
Of something holier than man could be;
And I can image thee a middle link
Of that great chain of intellect—the chain
That we may fancy earth with heaven to join.

Thy home seems not to be with man on earth,
Thou lovest not to mingle in earth's strife;
Thou seem'st to care not for man's idle mirth;
Thy heart seems given to another life.
No earthly thought thou seemest to inherit;
Thou seemest but to live in mind—in spirit.

Now age is creeping on thee, cold and drear;
Thou'rt but the meagre shadow of thy prime:
And, like shore-eating waves, each ruthless year
Marks in thy form the ravages of time.
Thy tottering steps, thy feeble, lessening frame,
Presagers are of life's decaying flame.

But thou hast had young days. I know not how
Thou thought and felt and look'd when, like myself,
Thou dream'd life's youthful dream. But this I know:
Thou never join'd in the pursuit of pelf:
Contented still a poor man to remain,
Rather than sear thy soul with worldly gain.

Yet, uncle, I could wish that thou had'st been
More snugly in the lap of comfort placed;
For thou art frail, and Poverty, I ween,
Too closely in her arms hath thee embraced.
Would thy estate were otherwise, or mine
Were rich as my desire to better thine.

Still thou art blest! for though in body thou
Hast little freedom on this mortal ball;
Though 'neath infirmities thou'rt forced to bow,
Thy *mind* is free, nor can be kept in thrall.
Freedom of body may be got for gold;
But the mind's freedom is not bought and sold.

And blest are they whose reason knows no blight—
Whose pure, unfetter'd minds are free to soar
In regions where true knowledge sheds its light,
Undimm'd by superstition's dismal lore:
For there are some who, sunk in ignorance,
Are chain'd to earth as in a death-like trance.

And there are some into whose lockfast minds
Have crept a few old thoughts, unchanged to rest;
And prejudice, like to a curtain, blinds
Their inward vision, and they fear to test
Their crude beliefs, e'en when their reason feels
A fallacy which prejudice conceals.

But, uncle, why should I thus speak to thee?
Thou knowest all and more than I can say:
And in these lines thou'lt many an error see;
But thou wilt check me where I've gone astray.
O I have need of thee to guide me on,
For hitherto I've groped my way alone.

Had some instructor kindly gone before,
And show'd me where best knowledge could be found,
I might 'ere now have had a goodly store
Of wisdom's wealth, of truths, deep and profound.
The little that I know I've learn'd by chance—
The weeds of learning, cull'd in ignorance.

O, uncle! thou who art so dear a friend,
May I not look to thee as to a father?
And may'st not thou my wavering footsteps tend,
Pointing to where thy wisdom thou didst gather!
Nor would thy pains be wasted on me, even
Though but one step thou led'st me nearer Heaven.

A DREAM VISIT TO A HAUNT OF MY BOYHOOD.

Between Dundee and Invergowrie kirk,
There is a lonely spot owergrown wi' brier,
Some scranky twigs o' ash, and some o' birk:
There maistly aye the sun is shining clear.

And, scatter'd round, gray rocks, like ruins, lie;
They hae a grandeur in their very gloom;
Lang wither'd grass shoots upwards, rank and high,
Through bristly whins that aften are in bloom.

Ah, 'tis a bonny spot! I aft gaed there,
When Sabbath stillness hung ower a' aroun',
And no a voice disturb'd the hallow'd air,
Except the birdie warblin' ower its tune.

There leanin' on a rock the hail half day,
I eagerly a list'ning ear wad keep,
To hear the hollow gurglin' o' the Tay,
As 'tween the rocks at intervals she'd creep.

Last nicht I wander'd to that lonely scene;
Though 'twas the dead o' nicht, the sky was clear;
But nicht grew day—the orb o' day did sheene—
And never did a day mair bricht appear.

There was the rock—I almost ca'd it mine,
Because it was the rock I used to choose—
And there I sat me doon for auld lang syne,
A while upon the by-gane days to muse.

There lies the wither'd ash—puir, broken thing—
The very tree whareon I used to shog.
A' things around me here reflections bring:
There lie the big round stanes owergrown wi' fog.

And there's the *figured* stane, dim to the sicht,
I thocht a relic o' some ither days,
And pu'd, and pu'd, and pu'd wi' a' my micht,
And did, at last, succeed that stane to raise.

Beneath, the sod was damp—white roots o' grass—
Wirms in their holes were drawing in their tails—
Across and slantways glarey streaks did pass,
And lookit like the slimy marks o' snails.

There, stane, just as I left ye still ye stand,
And there's the mark o' whar ye lay before,
Maybe some grannie, dead, could gi'en aff hand,
Lang screeds 'bout ye o' legendary lore.

But what's the meanin' o' sae mony birds?
There ne'er was half sae mony on thir braes!
And hark! I think I hear some whisperin' wirds:—
"Come let us bear him up," a blackie says.

This was the biggest blackie e'er I saw:
Had his neb but been black as it was red,
I'd taen him for some muckle hoodie-craw—
He'd funds o' mither-wit in yon big head!

Then did he gie his neck a gracefu' bend,
And haupin' came in-ower, no ony shy,—
"I'll shortly tell," says he, "what we intend;'
Auld friend, we're gaun to lift ye to the sky.

"There will ye get a cloud whareon to rest—
There will ye get a lyre whareon to play—
There, on your head, ye'll get a flowery crest—
There float about the air the lee-lang day.

"And should ye wish to get into the moon,
Or ony ither orb, a while to bide;
Soon as the wish comes in your head, as soon
Towards the place desired ye'll saftly glide.

"And dinna think, because ye canna see,
That in the clouds nae earthly beauties are;
There, plenty o' our kind—woods, burnies, be—
Than earthly beauties they are bonnier far.

"If ye to wander through the woods incline—
If rocky echoes should be your desire—
There's mony a place whareat thae twa combine,
And send a thousand echoes to the lyre."

Thus spak' the blackie, and he ended here;
Then maikently and gracefully turn'd round,
And noddit to the whins and to the brier,
And then I heard a chirpin' kind o' sound.

Of ilka singin' bird in Scotia's land
Around about the blackie cam a pair;
And ilka pair between them had a wand,
Whareon they bore me lichtly through the air.

But how we landed at our journey's end
Is what I winna tak in hand to say;
For here a darkness round us did extend,
And nicht was nicht, and was nae langer day.

SONNET

TO MISS SMART.

And if I have offended thee, I ask
This simple boon—*That I may be forgiven.*
A pardoning spirit is a gift from heaven.
That gift is thine: O let it be thy task
To show that thou can'st use a gift so rare
By pardoning one who owns that he has err'd.
I know my simple boon will be conferr'd;
For, like thy countenance, thy mind is fair:
I know there is a kindness in thy heart
That never could, and never will, deny
This small request of him whose every sigh
Tells that his bosom knows a rapturous smart.
"To err is human, to forgive divine:"
Mine is the first—O let the last be thine!

TO AN ALBUM.

Fair book! an emblem of thy owner's mind:
Thy silky leaves are soft as the new snow,
And many-colour'd as the bright rain-bow—
Meet tablets for the thoughts of womankind,
From whom alone etherial thoughts can flow.
Thy pages are too pure for thoughts of men,
And thus I fear to stain them with my prosy pen.

Fair book! thou art a lady's; yet, despite
Of all thy ornaments and beauteous forms,
Thy charms are not equal to *her* charms:
But of those charms my pen though fain to write,
Forbears, lest it should raise her soft alarms.
And yet, though she may scornfully reprove,
I'll love her—but 'twill not be with a *lover's* love.

Fair book! had I a secret to unfold,
Of slighted love, or bosom-rending sighs—
Of bleeding heart, or friendship's broken ties—
That secret on thy page should be enroll'd,
That they whose minds are form'd to sympathize,
Might know thy mute discovery of the tale,
Without being pain'd to hear a sad narrator's wail.

Fair book! what offering can I bring to thee?
Would that I could adorn thee with a song—
A simple bloom, a bud thy leaves among—
E'en though it like the desert flower should be,
To blush unseen, unblest by human tongue.
But would that I could bring a sparkling gem—
A pearl of great price to deck thy diadem!

Fair book! the song I sing thee soft should be;
For thou art soft and tender as a maid,
Round whose young heart the sigh of love has play'd.
O I could give a song of love to thee—
Of wasted love that never was repaid;—
For I have loved through long and weary years,
And ne'er been recompens'd but with my own sad tears.

Fair book! those years are gone, and at a close
Are all my dreams of love! the 'witching chain
Is broken now; and now love's restless train—
Sighs, hopes and fears, are hush'd into repose.
But there is bliss mix'd with the lover's pain,
E'en though for him there shine no hopeful ray;
And 'tis for this I mourn my hopeless love's decay.

Fair book! so soft and beautiful thou art,
That thou hast wooed me to a tender strain,
And dreams of by-gone love come in my brain.
O love! thy quickening light sheds on my heart
A transient glow, like sun-glints on the plain,
Or like moon-light on dark and lonely woods
When Luna looks from-out an opening in the clouds.

Fair book! thou'st brought a rapture in my soul,
And fill'd my bosom with a deep mild mirth.
The hours of dark, when poets leave the earth,
Have dream'd themselves away. How moments roll!
Already, see the morn steals trembling forth,
As if it fear'd to break the rest of men,
And call the soaring spirits back to the earth again.

Fair book! so fair, that I can fancy thee
A maiden, young and pure, myself thy lover;
And we have wooing been till night is over,
And morning coming forth to kiss the lea.
Now drowsy, dream-like visions round me hover,
And nature calls for rest to weary mind.
Adieu, fair book, then, I will try that rest to find.

THE AULD GABERLUNZIE IS DEAD AND AWA.

Wild was the e'enin', the wind it was howlin',
And souffin' and snellin' the drift it did blaw;
Doon in the muirland a doggie was yowlin'
For some weary body owerta'en by the snaw.
Sairlie we wish'd for the dawn o' the day,
And mony a saut tear o' sorrow did fa';
And mony a heart in the parish was wae,—
'Twas the auld Gaberlunzie lay dead in the snaw!

Nae mair will we feast ower the news o' the clachan,
Or hear how the lairds gang wi' lairds to the law;
We'll hear nae mair clashes to set us a-lauchin',—
The auld Gaberlunzie is dead and awa'.
Nae mair will auld grannie sit crackin' at e'en
Wi' the coothie auld carle ayont by the wa',
And lauch ower the jokes o' the days that hae been,
Now the auld Gaberlunzie is dead and awa'.

Nae mair will the lasses wha work at the ferm
Ken how ither lasses are growin' sae braw;
Or wha's to be married at Marti'mas term,—
The auld Gaberlunzie is dead and awa'.
Nae mair will auld grandfaither crack o' the war
Wi' the skilly auld bodie wha ken'd o' it a';
His heart now is dowie, and heavy, and sair,
Since the auld Gaberlunzie is dead and awa'.

Nae mair will the laddies hear auld farrant stories
O' ilka auld castle and queer-biggit ha',
O' ghaists and o' witches, o' warlocks and fairies,—
The auld Gaberlunzie is dead and awa'.
Wha could hae thocht we wad miss him sae ill!
The parish is no like a parish ava;
Naething to cheer us now! a' bodie's dull,
Since the auld Gaberlunzie is dead and awa'.

THE FLEECE AND THE STAR.

I've been at the south, I've been at the north,
I've been at the east and the west,
In quest of a maiden whom I could confide in,
And now I have found one at last.

I need not gone forth to the south or the north,
Nor did I require to go far;
This fair one retails—spirits, porter, and ales,
At the sign of the Fleece and the Star.

The arrows that fly from her love-flashing eye,
Might pierce through a breastplate of steel;
And, like her own ales, my poor heart she assails,
And forces my reason to reel.

Some say that a grove is the fit haunt for love,
But *I* say there's nought like a *Bar;*
Then give me my maid, as she follows her trade,
At the sign of the Fleece and the Star.

MY CHARMING MARY MELLOWS.

The sun has left the western sky,
The day gives place to gloaming;
And by yon shaded balcony
My Mary waits my coming.
The stars begin to start above,
The moon the evening hallows;
I go, I go to meet my love—
My charming Mary Mellows.

My heart rebounds with fond desire,
As trysting time returns;
No earthly pow'r can quench the fire
That in my bosom burns.
As piercing as the lightning's glare,
As restless as the billows;
Such is the bursting love I bear
For charming Mary Mellows.

Her eye is like yon glowing star,
With love and beauty beaming;
Her lips like dewy roses are
With sweet luxuriance teeming.
That amorous dimple in her chin
Is Cupid's home they tell us!
My only aim's to woo and win
My charming Mary Mellows.

I ANCE WAS LIKE YON LITTLE BIRD.

I ance was like yon little bird,
And had my love—a bonnie thing—
And side by side our hearts were tied,
But fortune broke the tying string.
I wander wearily alane,
And aye the tear comes in my ee,
As aft my thochts are o' the lass
That used to be sae kind to me.

Were I that laverock in the lift,
And Mary list'ning on the plain,
I'd sing sae sweet my sang o' love,
'Twad saften doon her high disdain.
Then wad I lichtly leave the lift,
And meet my Mary, fondly fain;
Then wad I fa' into her breast,
And tie her heart to mine again.

JANNY MERSHALL'S CANDY, O.

TUNE—"I'm ower young to marry yet."

CHORUS—O, Janny Mershall, Janny Mershall,
Janny Mershall's candy, O;
I always likes to patronize
Janny Mershall's candy, O.

When going along the Nethergate,
There's nought can be so handy, O,
As dropping in to get a stick
Of Janny Mershall's candy, O.

Ye'll get a stick as streicht's a rash,
A crookit ane, or bandy, O:
The grandest treat, for little cash,
Is Janny Mershall's candy, O.

The ladies fine come in the street,
Wi' dresses a' fu' dandy, O;
And weel they like their mou's to weet
Wi' Janny Mershall's candy, O.

There's no a lass in a' Dundee,
Frae modest dame to randy, O,
But wha wad want her cup o' tea
For Janny Mershall's candy, O.

There's no a loon in a' the toon,
A Jeamie, Jock, or Sandy, O,
But wha wad want his piece at noon
For Janny Mershall's candy, O.

When weety winter wi' the hoast,
Is like to rive and rend ye, O,
The best o' cures at little cost,
Is Janny Mershall's candy, O.

Some uses draps o' peppermint
To kill the smell o' brandy, O,
But, by my shuith, I'm weel content
Wi' Janny Mershall's candy, O.

Then come awa', baith great an' sma',
And let your purse attend ye, O,
And, while ye find a baubee in'd,
Buy Janny Mershall's candy, O.

OUR AIN AULD TOON.

Our ain auld toon! oh, our ain auld toon!
There is magic in thy name, there is music in the soun'!
When I look upo' thy hallans that sae smeeky are and dun—
  When I look upo' thy spires, as they pierce into the air—
When I look upo' thy winnocks, as they glisten i' th' sun—
  There comes a feeling ower me that I'm hardly fit to bear;
And the tear is in my e'e, for the day it has come roun'
When I maun turn my back upon our ain auld toon.

When I look at the auld steeple, and listen to its bell,
That seems an eldritch tale fu' dowie like to tell;
And when I look alang the clorty, crookit streets,
  And see the artless bairnies, sae frolicksome at play,—
There comes a thrilling ower me, and my heart wi' rapture beats,
  And I think upon my bairnhood—a short-lived sunnie day;—
For these were a' my haunts when I was a careless loon,
And never had a thocht to leave our ain auld toon.

But ah! we've little skill in the workings o' the mind;
It is fickle at the best, and it changes like the wind;
The thochts and the fancies and the feelings o' the bairn
  Grow dim and fade awa' as years come ower the frame.
Our life is like a day, and in its sunnie morn
  Our wishes are content wi' the pleasures o' our hame;
But when the morning's past, and our life is near its noon,
We may tak' anither thocht, and leave our ain auld toon.

When I was a wee-bit laddie, and wanton'd ower the lea,
The singin' o' the birdie, or the hummin' o' the bee
Wad hae brocht a charm ower me, and fix'd me to the spot,
  And there I'd stand entranced, wi' the tear into my e'e;

And then the torments o' the schule, and a' thing, were for-
got,
For the sylvan haunts o' woods and fields were sweeter
far to me:
And aft on bonnie simmer days I'd liked to play the truan,
For the sun-glints seem'd to wile me frae our ain auld toon.

But, our ain auld toon, oh I couldna leave ye lang!
Just as far's yon birken wood, and nae farther wad I gang;
Or whar yon bickerin' burnie gaes birlin' doon the brae,
And clatters a' the day, as it seems to chase itsel';
Or westward by yon bonnie green at gloamin' wad I gae,
When the wavelets come a-wooing to the beach their love
to tell;
Or I'd sclammer up yon hill, and frae its tap look doon
Into the very heart o' our ain auld toon.

But the day is come at last, e'en the very moment's near,
And my friends are on the craig, and the boat is at the pier.
I try to hide the tear as it steals into my e'e,
And I try to crush the sigh as it rises in my breast;
But to see sae mony friends a' gather'd here for me,
Brings strange notions ower me, and they winna bide at
rest.
O my head is a' bambazed and my heart is in a swoon—
I maun confess I'm wae to leave our ain auld toon.

I left it ance before, and laith I was to part;
For youth's first smile o' love had begun to warm my heart;
And though I left our ain auld toon, my heart was left behind,
And my thochts dwelt aye on ane, and I liked to lisp her
name:
And a' the lee-lang day in love-sick grief I pined;
And at midnicht's dreamy hour my sick heart socht its
hame;—
But my time was thrown awa, for I cou'dna settle doon
Till I wan back again to our ain auld toon.

O love, ye are a bonnie thing when ye are young and new,
And ye saften a' within us, and ye mak' us pure and true;
And *ye* flush'd ower my young heart sae bonnilie the while,
Like a smile upo' the face o' a bairn when asleep;
And like the smile ye grew, but ye faded like the smile!
And I ken na why ye faded, for my joy was pure and deep.—
Though my hour o' love was lang, yet it left me unco soon!
Now it's *friendship* mak's me wae to leave our ain auld toon.

And friendship, what art thou? a hamely fireside thing—
A link for souls in unison—a joy that has nae sting!
O I hae lo'ed thee, friendship, though my love was little shown;
But, like a' my ither feelin's, I cou'dna gie't a tongue;
Sae I seem not what I am, for my heart is all unknown;
And my thochts an' passions a' lie unseen, untauld, unsung:
Sae am I aft in solitude when numbers are aroun';
Unken'd I've lived, unken'd I leave our ain auld toon.

But the boat has left the pier, and she waddles ower the firth,
And our ain auld toon to me seems the bonniest spot on earth:
My friends seem dearer too, though to me they aye were dear;
And the joys I've haen wi' them come again upo' my mind:
How can I do but greet to see them on the pier,
As they dander slowly up, and wave and look behind?
And when I think on what I've dune my heart it gies a stoun'—
O am I no a fule to leave our ain auld toon?

Now we maun leave the boat, for the water we hae crost;
And amid the hurry-burry I seem as I were lost:
I dinna hear around me the traveller's reproach
On some unlucky chields that against his will hae ackit:
While I should see my luggage safely carried to the coach,
I leave't to ony ane that may hae the will to tak' it.
Nae guard, nae coachman do I see, nor hear the trumpet's soun'—
My heart, my soul are centr'd in our ain auld toon.

Now I'm mounted on the coach, high upo' the backmost seat:
And the crackin' o' the whup, and the gallopin' o' feet,
And the soundin' o' the horn, and the birrin' o' the wheels,
  Tend to alter for a while the tenor o' my mind.
We pass by mony a scene, but my heart nae interest feels:
  There's just ae scene that *I* care for, to a' the rest I'm
    blind;
And at ilk hicht upon the road, I rise and look aroun',
Just to get anither sicht o' our ain auld toon.

But I winna see't again, for we're past the hin'most hicht,
And e'en the very Law, it has nodded out o' sicht!
I look fu' lang and wistfully upo' yon cloud o' smoke
  That hovers ower the spot where the dear auld toon doth
    lie.
O my heart is grit and sair, and I feel as I wad choke!
  I wad greet, but wad be seen, and I fain wad hide the sigh;
But I canna keep it in, as I turn and sit me doon,
For I canna get ae blink o' our ain auld toon.

Our ain auld toon! O our ain auld toon!
There is magic in the name, there is music in the soun'!
Though vanish'd from my sight, I can image it in thought,
  And live again the happy days that I have lived before;
And in my dreams by night I will seek the blessed spot,
  Though I should wake to sorrowing upon a foreign shore!
O the sun may cease to sheene and the warld to rin roun',
But I never, never can forget our ain auld toon!

TO A LIGHTHOUSE AT NIGHT,

SEEN FROM THE SEA.

Spirit of Caledonia's rocky coast!
Thy pale beam, glimmering like a star of night,
Looks o'er the sea a while: anon 'tis lost;
Then comes forth in a blaze of purest light,
Like a lost soul redeem'd: Again it wanes;
But soon a blood-flame gleams upon the sight,
Like a thrall'd warrior bursting from his chains,
Stunning the world with wonder of his might.—
Bright beacon light! thou may'st be liken'd to
The Book of God—the beacon light of heaven:
Thou appear'st in different shades, yet all are true;
The heavenly light is like thee in this even:
Thy ends are one—a blessed end—for both
Are lamps to light the nighted pilgrim's path.

THE GUID GRAY CAT,

AN BALLAD.

[*Extract from my Log-Book.*—"I must not forget to mention a circumstance of a most remarkable nature which happened late last night, after the storm. You will remember that I mentioned a cat in the list of our crew and passengers. Mr. Brown, the mate, brought her on board the night before we sailed; but since that night she had never been seen or heard. What makes this so strange is, that Mr. Brown got her from an old woman who has the reputation of being a witch—a descendant of the celebrated "Witch o' Fife." Many interesting conjectures had been given out concerning the fate of poosie; but all quite vague and unsatisfactory. Nothing of an authentic nature could be learned until last night. It was Mr. Brown's watch on deck from twelve at night until four in the morning. He was standing on the front of the quarter-deck, contemplating the wrecked appearance of the ship; surveying the starry heavens, and remarking the repose that reigned after the

storm; and just as it might have been betwixt twelve and one, and while he was in the midst of a profound reverie, he was startled by a most unearthly *skoil*. He looked in the direction from which it came, and behold! there stood the cat!—But we are very much divided in opinion as to whether it was the real flesh and blood cat herself, or whether it was a phantasy of Mr. Brown's, resulting perhaps from the wound he had received in his head during the storm; or whether it was a bona-fide apparition of the cat, come to unravel the mystery of her disappearance—to impart some needful caution, or vent her displeasure on the unfortunate man who brought her from her comfortable quarters at home.—Holding a certain kind of faith in ghosts and witches, I am inclined to accept the last supposition, and have taken the trouble to weave the event, with its attendant circumstances, into a ballad, in order that it may be the better preserved, to attest the reasonableness of my faith.—I may add that baudrons has not again been seen.]

PART I.

The ship rides in the roads o' Leith
  Awaiting the westlan' breeze;
Wi' the first fair gale she is bound to sail
  Far, far across the seas.

And she has in baith meat and drink,
  Wad fend a score o' men;
Eneuch to sair them a' and mair
  Till she comes back again;
But for every man there is on-buird,
  O' mice there's ten times ten.

Now mice maun hae their meat and drink
  As weel as ither folk;
For mice and men, fu' weel ye ken,
  Are Nature's common stock.

But the MATE has gane to an eldrin dame,
  And a queer auld dame was she;
For she gat her life frae the Witch o' Fife,
  And eke her gramarie.

"I've heard o' your name, my skilly auld dame—
And a good death may ye dee;
Now ye'll try your might on a cantrip sleight,
And rewarded ye shall be.

The mice that skip about our ship
Are growin' sae bauld and sae crouse,
They mind not the ban nor the face of man
No more than he were ane louse.

The mice that skip about our ship—
There's a thousand if there's one,
Sae ye'll gie me a charm to get rid o' the swarm
Or they'll eat us skin and bone."

"Now, woe betide the mariner
That plays his pranks on mice!
This is ane score that I have not power
Quharon to give advice.

But I'll gie to you ane guid gray cat
Quhase marrow's no in Fife;
An she'll thin your ship quhare'er they skip—
Gif that they're no *owre* rife.

But gif it be as ye haif said,
They be sae mony an' sae croose,
I dreid me that ane guid gray cat
Will be of littil use.

Sae ye'll leave my cat gif it be true
That sae your ship is swarmin';
For I wald not that my guid gray cat
Suld be eaten up by sic vermin."

"No fear, no fear, my guid auld dame—
No fear at all of that;
For I vow and swear, if I e'er come hame,
I'll bring you the guid gray cat."

Now he has gotten the guid gray cat,
And he's put her in a seck;
He's taen her to the ship, and he's gien her the slip,
And she loups out on the deck.

And vow, she is as bonnie a cat
As e'er did rin ther-out;
And the sailors a' stare in admeerin' air
To see how she loups aboot.

She had not paced the deck but twice,
When the fire flash'd frae her e'e,
And she girn'd and she spurn'd, for she scented the mice,
And lang'd their bluid to pree;
Then, wi' a squeel and a spring and a wheel,
Doon through the hatch flew she.

PART II.

The morning comes, the dawning glooms,
The westlan' wind doth blaw,
And it snorts and spits in spitefu' fits,
Wi' rain and sleet and snaw,
Whilk sperge and snift athort the lift;
Lord Arthur's seat looks through the drift,
And the loom o' Berwick Law.

The sailors sing a fareweel sang
To the land o' their love and birth;
The anchor's weigh'd, and the sails are set,
And the ship scuds doon the firth.

The westlan' wind blaws on behind;
It wafts them out o' the Forth;
And, when they fell in the ocean's swell,
They turn'd them to the north.

O, up and spak' the gallant MATE,
As they sat at their dine,
"Ye'll tak' this slice of beef, my boy,
Unto that Cat of mine."

The boy's taen the slice o' beef
And gane aboot the deck,
And aye he cries upo' the Cat,
But she winna answer back:

"O poosie, poosie baudrins,
What the deevil di' ye mean?"
And aye the laddie cries and cries,
But nae poosie could be seen.

The first day that the ship was out,
She made near Aberdeen:
The mornin's mist had taen its flicht,
The afternoon was bonnie and bricht,
And the heavens at nicht, wi' starlet's licht,
Were in a glorious sheen.

The second day that the ship was out,
She made the Moray Firth;
And there she lay the lee lang day,
For a calm fell ower the earth.

The wind was husht, and a darksome mist
Cam' brooding ower the ocean,
And the ship did shog like a heavy log,
Wi' a rolling, lurching motion.

And the mist cam' round like a prison's bound,
'Twas drear as drear could be;
And nocht was seen to glad the een,
But the dead swell o' the sea.

O, up and spak' the gallant MATE,
As they sat at their dine,
"Go take this slice of beef, my boy,
Unto that Cat of mine."

The boy's taen the slice o' beef
And gane aboot the deck,
And aye he cries upo' the Cat,
But she winna answer back.

"O poosie, poosie baudrins,
What the deevil di' ye mean?"
And aye the laddie cries and cries,
But nae poosie can be seen.

The breeze sprang up at dead o' night,
The ship made a sudden bound,
And she scoured the seas before the breeze,
Like a hare before a hound.

And they sailëd on, and on they sail'd,
And aye they held them north;
And the morrow's sun, ere it was noon,
Saw them through the Pentland Firth.

And they sailëd on, and on they sail'd
Upon their wat'ry path;
And the third nicht that the ship was out,
She was sailin' by Cape Wrath.

The fourth day that the ship was out,
They saw the Lewis Isle:
The main-land loom'd, and the cluds they gloom'd,
And they lookit fu' o' guile;
And then they rent and the rain gat vent,
And the sleet was sent wi' a sniftin' slent,
And wi' a fiendish, fell intent,
The Kelpie laucht the while.

O the Kelpie he's a spitefu' dog,
A wierd, unchancie chiel';
He haunts the sea-shore and the bog—
He's a bairn o' the de'il;
For he lauchs his fill whan things gang ill,
And he greets whan things gang weel.

O up and spak the gallant MATE,
As they sat at their dine,
"Go take this slice of beef, my boy,
Unto that Cat of mine."

The boy's taen the slice o' beef
And gane aboot the deck,
And aye he cries upo' the Cat,
But she winna answer back.

"O poosie, poosie baudrins,
What the deevil di' ye mean?"
And aye the laddie cries and cries,
But nae poosie can be seen.

The next day that the ship was out,
St Kilda's Isle she made;
And twa days there she dodg'd aboot,
For the wind was richt ahead.

She dodg'd aboot and she dodg'd aboot,
But nae muckle did she gang;
O the winds were chill, and the days were dull,
And the nichts were mirk and lang.

And ilka nicht a witch-like licht
Cam' sparklin' frae the sea,
Till the ocean below wi' lichts did glow,
Like stars in the heavens hie.

The purpoise flew—and his track shone blue,
As he scuddit through the faem;
The big whale blew—and the water he threw
Gaed up like a brimstane flame,
Whilk burst on hie and dazzilt the e'e
As a shour o' blue licht doon came.

The seventh day that the ship was out,
She was wearin' near Rock-all;
But alas! and alake! how the heart doth quake
To think what did befall!
What tongue can tell the dangers fell
Of hurricane and squall!

The dawn had scarce begun to peep
Whan the cluds cam' crowdin' round,
And the ocean wauken'd frae his sleep
Like a giant frae a swound,
Wi' a far-aff snore, lang hoarse, and deep—
The very flesh wi' fear did creep
To hear the boding sound.

Then Boreas, frae his norland cave,
Cam' forth wi' a fiend-like roar;
And he peal'd alang frae wave to wave,
And boom'd frae shore to shore.

He tore the brine frae the foamy waves,
And spat aboot the spray,
And he hollow'd the deep lake yawning graves
Awaiting for their prey.

Thick vapour rises frae the sea,
And wings alang the lift;
And, wi' sweesh and sweep across the deep,
Brine mingles wi' the drift.

Nae sun was seen in the heavens to sheene
Wi' a kindly, cheerin' licht,
For his beams they couldna pierce the gloom,
And day was dark as nicht.

Then the lightning gleam'd and the water stream'd
As it skimm'd alang the sea;
And the thunder hurl'd like a broken world
Gone into eternitie.

And the big waves dash'd and roar'd, and lash'd
Each other into wrath;
And the sea birds wheel'd, and shriek'd, and squeel'd,
As they sang the dirge of death.

The gallant ship rides in the swell,
Her bare yards brave the gale;
But she heaves on high like a pearly shell,
And her tall masts creak and quail;
The shrouds are moaning, the timbers groaning,—
The mariner's cheek is pale.

And clinging to the mizen shrouds,
Each wet and trembling stands,
While the waves wash o'er, with a dread uproar—
Bleaching the face and hands.

But, see yon mountain of the deep,
Rolling along in wrath!
His crest is white, and his sides are steep,
All other waves before him leap,—
Clearing his wayward path;
And in his desolating sweep
Destruction lies, and death.

The sailors eye him coming on,
And well they know his pow'r;
Each in his hand has grasped a rope,
And all expectant cow'r.

Then with a smash and a heavy crash
The wat'ry monster leaps
Down on the deck, bestrewing wreck
And ruin where he sweeps.

The decks are swept, and the surge has crept
In at every yawning seam;
And the gallant MATE rolls on the deck,
As he were in a wrangling dream.

The reid bluid oozes frae a wound
That gaps in his manly head:
"Come bear a hand," the Captain cries,
"Be handy now, my gallant boys,
And put our MATE to bed."

And the white foam oozes frae his mooth,
As the bluid does frae his wound,
And they carry him down the cabin stair—
All in a deadly swound.

Still Boreas roars his dreadful roar,
And still the sea o'erwhelms;
The thunder hurls more and more,
As if the giant columns
That stud the mighty dome of heaven
Were by some dire convulsion driven
In tumbling ruin; while the volumes
Of lurid light that start and gleam
As if they joy'd in the alarm
Of elemental madness, seem
The moving spirits of the storm.

'Tis thus the day drives on, and still
The mariner's cheek is pale;
And it shines like death in the lightning's glare,
As he turns to heaven with a look of pray'r,
For he deems there is some kind spirit there
That may hearken to his wail.

Part III.

If't warna for the ills we dree,
O whar wad be our pleasure?
If't warna for our povertie,
Wad riches be a treasure?

How awesome was the storm this day!
How fearsome was its micht!
But the wrath o' heaven hath roll'd away,
And left a beauteous nicht.

Now Boreas hies him hame again,
And sobs as he were in a swoon,
And the lazy waves nae sooner rise
Than they brak and tummel doon;
And they lisp and lipp alang the ship,
Wi' a sweet melodious soun'—
Sweet as the breeze amang the trees,
On a simmer's day at noon.

The Kelpie skoils across the main
Frae some crannie dark and deep;
And he blubbers like a pettit wean,
Whan it waukens owre sune frae its sleep:
The mariners listen to the strain,
And their hearts wi' joy do leap;
O! they like to hear his sad complain',
For they ken it bodes weel to the earth again,
Whan they hear him wail and weep.

It's now the dead hour o' the nicht;
The stars dance round wi' glee,
And shoot through the air a flickerin' licht
That faintly illumes the sea.

The waves are asleep in the bed o' the Deep,
The wind is asleep on his lip,
And the ship is at rest on his stifled breast,
But wow she's a frichtsome ship!

O whar be a' her sails and tether,
That were like the driven snaw?
Bauld Boreas heis'd them on his shuither
And bore them clean awa.

And whar be now her bonnie masts,
That taper'd to the starns?
Bauld Boreas taen them ane by ane,
And brak them wi' his horns.

When the mid-watch was called, and the men were taul'd
To keep a guid "look out,"
The MATE cam' up the cabin stair,
Wi' his head intil ane cloot:
He was charm'd out o' his deadlie swound,
But still his wound did sting and stound,
And his een reel'd roond aboot.

He stuid upon the quarter-deck,
And thocht o' the day's turmoil;
And as he gazed upo' the wreck
He heard ane hellish skoil,
Like that whilk aft at nicht is heard
Frae some back-coort or lumber yaird,
When, free frae tyrant man's regaird,
Baudrins maks love the while.

His hair stuid up, and lifted hie,
Baith swadlin' cloot, and hat;
And fear fill'd his dilatit e'e—
"O heavens! what was that?'
When, lookin' doon upo' the deck,
He saw—the GUID GRAY CAT!

But alter'd was she now, I ween,
Frae what she wont to be:
Her form was o' the faint mune-sheen,
Twa gleamin' stars were now her een,
Frae whilk cam sparks o' red and green;
And fearsome 'twas to see
Her clenchin' paws, and girnin' jaws,
Whence spewin' came a bluid-red flame,
While frae her back did flee
Blue specks o' licht, like needle points,
Sae dazzling to the e'e.

She stuid upon her hinder legs,
Like to a rampant horse;
And the deck aroun' was a' bestrewn
Wi' mony a moose's corse.

Their forms were o' the clear sky blue,
Like little cluds o' licht;
And winding through, their forms between,
Sma' string-like streams o' bluid were seen,
Frae whilk a vapor, thin and green,
Rose up into the nicht.

Then, out and spak the gallant MATE,
While his heart did dunt wi' fear,
"Whan wilt thou cease to vex, O Fate!
What devilment is here?

"Is this a glamor ower my een
A wilderment o' sicht?
Or is it all a frenzied dream
A veesion o' the nicht?"

He rubbit roond aboot his brow,
And in aboot his e'e—
"I'm sure I am not sleepin' now—
O! what is this I see?"

She gash'd at him her girnin' jaws,
He started and was mute;
And in her throt he heard ane whauze,
Then spak' the ghastly brute.

Her husky voice did sound richt strange—
Ilk wird was like death's knell;
And her breath rose to his very nose,
And he faund a dank, dank smell.

"Lang, lang an' deadly wals the fray
An' monie a moose I slew,
Quhilk's bodies lie aroond me here,
I wite ane ghastly crew.

"But on they cam' an' they cam' on—
Ane wild, ane countless pour;
They flew at me, I flew at them,
An' I wappit them aboot like stour.

"An' aye I focht, an' sae sairlie I focht,
Till I weaker an' weaker grew;
For there wals not ane vein in my hail bodie
But wals bitten through an' through.

"Then I sunk, an' I sunk, quhile my hert's bluid ran,
An' the gurgle in my throat wals heard;
But juist as my hert-strings brak' in twa
I mindit the WITCH'S WORD.

"Then I swoon'd awa, frae amid them a',
As I pairtit wi' earthly life;
But I wauken'd again on the warm hearth-stane,
At my grannie's fireside, in Fife.

"But ane woman can ne'er be ane witch again,
Quhan ance by mice scho's fell'd;
Sae I noo maun mean as weary a ane,
As e'er in witchland dwell'd.

"Now woe betide thee, mariner,
And an ill death mat thou dee;
'Twas thou vile man, and none but thou,
That brocht this dule on me."

Then out and spak' the gallant MATE,
And a fearsome man was he,
"Ye lee, ye lee, ye vile, vile brute,
Sae loud as I hear ye lee!"

"O ho!" quoth the CAT, as she brissl'd up,
"Dost thou think to daunton me?
Be calm, bauld sir, nor be so wroth,
Though thou hae guid cause to be,
For thou'st brocht on thysel' ane judgement fell,
Quhilk sall last to eternitie.

"Quha was't that brocht me till this schip,
Quhilk's hould is like ane hell?
Quha was't that brocht me till this schip?
Quha wals it but thysel'?

"But ye'll rue it yet, ay ye'll rue it yet,
For my vengeance I maun hae,—
Look aroond yer deck, and behold the wreck,
An' think o' the storm this day:—
Quhat white cloot's that aboot yer head?
Quhat gar'd ye lie as ye'd been dead?
Come tell me *that*, I say!
Quhan ye lay an' sprawl'd, an' graen'd, an' swoon'd,
Wals I not there? ha! ha! I'll be bound
I wals not far away."

"Then by my faith," quoth the gallant MATE,
"I, too, reveng'd shall be!"
And as he spak he seized ane spoke
And was gaun to lat it flee.

But she fix'd on him ane furious glare
That thrill'd him to the bane;
He sunk subdued in a suppliant mood,
And he gave ane heavy graen.

Then ower his lips there cam' ane pray'r,
And he breath'd it ferventlie;
Then cam' ane voice through the midnicht air,
Said, "*Fear not, look and see!*

"Be this a lesson unto thee—
Deal not with gramarie:
By witchcraft's aid thou hast been misled,
But for this time thou art free;
Thy pray'r has been heard, thou hast thy reward—
Fear not, but look and see!"

He lookit before him on the deck,
And lo! what saw he there?
Ane monstrous fiend a' cover'd ower
Wi' black and towsie hair;
Like to ane man in arms and face,
But legs and horns like cattle beas;—
His bluidshot een and smeeky phiz,
Wi' wizen'd mouth and hookit niz,
Shaw'd deevilment in his air.

He held ane three taed grape on hie,
Wi' the goblin cat thereon;
She wrigglt and wrung, and the fire did flee,
While the deck as wi' a meteor shone.

He keekit up unto the CAT—
And ane auld farrent look gae he;
"Ha! ha! you're a witch, but I'll let you know,
You must get your pow'r from me."

Then keekit he unto the MATE—
  And ane auld farrent look gae he;
Then laid his finger til his nose,
  And winkit wi' his ee';
Then frae the deck wi' ane spring he rose,
  An whirr'd out ower the sea.

Away he reel'd and away he wheel'd,
  Like a comet through the darkness o' nicht;
And fire sparks flasht as on he dasht,
And a livid flake flush'd in his wake,
  Wi' a luminatin' licht;—
The goblin Cat she yell'd and squeel'd,
  Till the seabirds wauken'd wi' the fricht,
And they rose on high through the midnicht sky,
  And follow'd to see the sicht.

Now there sprang up a broad bricht flame,
  Where the sky and the ocean close;
The surroundin' air was scorched wi' the glare,
  And volumes o' smoke uprose.
And into the midst o' this bricht flame,
  There was a rugged rent
Like to a cave, but no eye could see
  How far the cavern went.

It spewed out fire and it vomited forth
What seem'd like clods o' burning earth;
And fumes of smoke from the cavern broke,
And demons cross'd and danc'd and toss'd,
And loathsome things were seen to crawl
Where lava streams through the flames did fall;
Grim wither'd heads and limbs were strewn,
  And serpents twined between,
And grizzl't hags, brunt black and broon,
  Danc'd round the dismal scene.

When the black fiend came to this michtie flame,
He yell'd ane fearful yell:
And the Gray Cat gowl'd, and the grizzlt hags howl'd;
He entered in, and at once the scene
Doon into the deep sea fell:
Then were heard loud jars o' bursting bars
As they open'd the gates o' hell:—
But here ane veil comes over my tale,
For the rest I durst not tell.

* * * * * * *

Then look'd the MATE all o'er the deck,
But nothing met his eye:
The ghosts o' the mice had dwam'd awa'
Like the glimmering stars on high,
When the ruddy morn shoots out his horn
And frichts them frae the sky.

He knelt him down upon his knee
And try'd another pray'r;
He blest the voice most gratefully,
That whispered through the air;
And in his pray'r he own'd that he
Had been ane wicked one;
But, on his knees, he vow'd to be
Henceforth ane haly man.

By this the stars were winkin' dim,
For dawn began to peep;
The sun upturned his rosy rim,
And creepit frae the deep;
The mune lang syne had dous'd her glim,
And laid her doon to sleep.

And now the MATE—his matins done—
He call'd all hands on deck,
And sent them, every mother's son,
To clear away the wreck.

But how it fared with them, or fell,
I leave it for the MATE to tell;
My tale was of THE GUID GRAY CAT,
And there has been enough of that.

SONNET.

My soul is sad! I know not why 'tis so,
Since all is quietude within my breast—
No rancorous tumult there, all, all is rest;—
Too still, indeed; for would my spirits flow,
'Twould wake my soul from this dull, heavy sleep.—
But Nature, too, is still as well as I:—
The sultry noon-day sun, the cloudless sky,
The stealthy, timorous breeze, the panting deep,
The wavelets lisping as they kiss the ship,
Like accents from a love-sick maiden's lip.—
O I love quietude on land! but, here,
There is a something that I cannot bear:
'Tis sickly sweet!—would it would come a storm:
My soul should leap to joy in the wild alarm.

TO SLEEP.

O Sleep! would that thou'dst seek my lonesome bed;
The night wanes late, I am wearied watching now;
For I have vainly wooed thee till my brow
Is in a fever'd flame, my aching head
Feels as the downy pillow were a stone.
Go leave me, Thought, that sleep may fill thy stead—
I fain would wile her from her stary throne—
Come Sleep!

Fair Sleep! mind-soothing, soul-bewitching sleep!
Come, fair enchantress, I would with thee speak—
O come and fan this fever from my cheek:
I now with Thought no more communion keep;
Be not afraid, fair spirit, to alight,
Thy breath will soothe me into slumbers deep;
My weary brain hath need of them to night—
Come Sleep!

Sweet Sleep! thou'rt sweeter than the breath of May;
Her dew is not so sweet as thou, nor are
The moorland zephyrs coming from afar,
Sucking the breath of wildflowers by the way.
Thou art so pure we cannot see thy form;
And thou art soft as is the moonlight-ray:
Thou gladd'st the soul as Cynthia doth a storm—
Come Sleep!

Mild Sleep! methinks I see thee o'er me hover,
Thy seraph wings expanding to descend:
They fan me now, their balmy wavings blend
Along my brow; strange elf-light things come over
My fancied sight: now Thought's unmeaning train
Runs through my mind; and like a spell-bound lover,
Thou hast enslaved me with a witching chain—
Mild Sleep!

Deep sleep! now thou art sitting on my breast;
Mine eyes thou'st seal'd with kisses sweet, and they
Have suck'd my very senses all away.
No more my brain, with aching thought oppress'd,
Beats sore; for now alike to bliss or woe
'Tis dead: thou'st stretch'd my frame in death-like rest—
I know not that I am, thou'st changed me so—
Deep Sleep!

* * * * * * *

Strange Sleep! thy first fond, warm embrace is o'er,
And thou art but a flimsy tissue now:
Thou'rt flirting o'er my breast and round my brow—
A fairy thing! And like the sounding shore
Afar, far off, a noise comes in mine ear:
I sleep, and yet I know it; and the lore
That haunts my brain, seems truth—and yet how queer!
Strange Sleep!

Go, Sleep—sweet thing! I pray thee go away:—
A faint light streaks mine eye-lids and they ope;
I look far o'er the ocean's endless scope—
A red rim hems my view—and lo! 'tis day.
Small sleep sufficeth youth, so pray thee go!
My limbs feel strength renew'd, and morning's ray
Sheds o'er my heart a light and lively glow—
Go, Sleep!

Kind Sleep! thanks for thy much loved companie,
Thou sweet, soft-soothing, wonder-working thing!
For thou dost bear me 'neath thy downy wing
To youth's dear home, afar in yon countree,
Where love and friendship live, and fireside bliss:
And many a joy I taste 'ere thou dost bring
Me back again o'er the blue sea's abyss—
Kind Sleep!

Just Sleep! thou art the poor man's dearest friend:
Wealth cannot buy thee, and the wealthy man,
Restive with rest, is sleepless oft and wan;
But labouring Poverty thou aye dost tend:
And thou o'er virtuous hearts kind watch dost keep;
Thou dost o'er slander'd Innocence descend,
But shun'st its slanderers—truth-loving Sleep—
Just Sleep!

Spirit Sleep! were I to hear Philosophy
Tell what thou art, I would not list the tale;
For thou might'st be a thing of earth—too frail
The object of my airy thoughts to be.
I'll heed not what thou art in Science deep,
But take thee as thou art in Poesie—
Thou darling of the fancy—dreamy Sleep!
Spirit Sleep!

SONNET.

TO A MOTHER CAREY'S CHICKEN, THAT FOLLOWED THE SHIP A THOUSAND MILES FROM LAND.

Thou little elf-like thing! thy whole delight
Seems wantoning in Ocean's whirling sweep;
Now in a hollow hid, now o'er the height
Of some high curling wave, in whose wild leap
Thou seem'st enraptured!—Yet thou must be lone!
The long day—e'en the moony night—to roam,
Must grow monotonous. Or is thy *home*
Among the waves? Or art thou like myself—
A pilgrim journeying I heed not where?
O let all earth be mine, and sea and air!
They *are* mine! and I look on thee, glad elf
With a friend's regard—wishing thee not to part;
And, as I look, a warmth comes round my heart.

SONNET,

WRITTEN ON THE 20TH FEBRUARY.

And can it be that I am *twenty-one!*
Well, I will not believe it, for I feel
As if I were a boy: I cannot deal
In things that stir the world, nor yet with man
Can I hold man-like converse: the whole plan,
Structure, and working of my mind reveal
That, like a floating thing caught in a *wiel*,
I've lagg'd behind while Time's stream onward ran.
Swift Time! O, I will ne'er o'ertake thy speed!
Well, well, run on; thy reckonings I'll blot
From off my memory's page; my life-time's meed
I'll measure by the growing of my Thought;
And ever when I do a goodly deed,
I'll mark *that* as an era in my lot.

THE GUILTY SOUL.

You bid me to the green meads go,
Where the crystal waters wind;
You say there is a charm there
That heals the troubled mind.
You say the music of the woods
Might wile away my care:—
Ah no! the guilty soul
Can find no comfort there.

I've wander'd in yon meadow green,
I've sitten by its spring;
But my dreary mind grew drearier
To hear its murmuring.

I've bared my fever'd brow to feel
The meadow's cooling air:—
But no! the guilty soul
Could find no comfort there.

I've listen'd to the wild-bird's voice,
Far in yon hollow wood;
But a fearfulness came over me
In the deep solitude:
Methought a scornful whispering
Came to my startled ear:—
Ah no! the guilty soul
Could find no comfort there.

I have no soul for scenes like these;
They are too pure for me,
And my polluted heart can not
Drink in their purity:
Their beauty only makes me feel
How black my vices were:—
Ah no! the guilty soul
Can find no comfort there.

O, leave me to myself, my friend!
Look not upon my pain!
The burning tears of penitence
Are bursting from my brain.
There is a balm in penitence—
A comfort for all care;
And O! the guilty soul
Can find it only there.

MAN IS A VAPOUR.

WRITTEN AT SEA, ON SEEING A SMALL WHITE CLOUD RISING FROM THE LAND.

A cloudlet rose from earth's swampy wells,
  Hovering like a living thing;
But the air crept into its pory cells,
Severing it into particles,
  Plucking its downy wing;
Till it faded from the gazer's sight,
    Ne'er to unite.

Man is a vapour, by life's ray
  Drawn into light. But through his frame
Creeps Death and chemical decay;
His filmy substance shrinks away—
  Going to whence it came—
Through earth and air, the world o'er,
    To meet no more.

Is this the finish of our days?
  Is there no life in our lost breath?
Has Mind, when set on earth, no rays
Elsewhere? A voice within us says,
  "Thy answerer is Death."
If Death can tell us this,—O, why
    Would we not die!

TO BARBARA.

I need not tell that thou art fair:
Thy pearly skin and raven hair,
That spirit in thy jetty eye,
Can speak more truthfully than I.—
I need not tell that thou art kind:
The quiet beauties of thy mind
Shine in the mirror of thy face,
Where nought but goodness we may trace.
Wert thou not good and lovely too,
I could not love thee as I do.

Dear love, O let this tremulous arm
Clasp to my heart that gentle form:
But do not turn those eyes on me
So sadly, so imploringly.
Thou shrink'st as if I'd do thee ill—
I could not though I had the will:
That look such feeling o'er me brings,
It lifts me above lowly things.
Were not my thoughts both pure and true,
I could not love thee as I do.

BARBARA'S EYES.

Those eyes are globes of light, in beauty living,
In their own lustre swimming;
Unto my love-bound heart a halo giving,
As when the full moon, beaming,
Encircles earth with light—a beauteous light
Wherein bewitchment lies:
But ne'er was earth so 'tranced with the queen of night
As I with Barbara's eyes.

BARBARA'S BREAST.

Sweet love, O be thy breast a bed
Whereon my weary head
May lie; and pillow'd on thy breast
O let it rest.
There is no down so soft as this;
There is no earthly bliss
Like a lover's sleep on a breast of snow
Where blue veins trickling flow.
Thy silky skin touching my cheek
Sends a tremor through me that doth speak
Unto my soul in sweeter tongue
Than ever words have sung.
It wooeth me to sleep
In love deep, deep.

TIME STEALS AWAY.

Time steals away
Like nightly thief; we dream not of his going.
O blind and deaf! by day
We see him not, night hear him not—unknowing
The beggars we are made—our dear life ta'en—
The treasure that we never can regain.

Stop, slippery thing!
Ah no! 'tis gone; it neither stops nor lingers;
And vain is following.
I grasp'd it as it pass'd, but through my fingers,
Eel-like, it slipt. I thought 'twas mine for using,
Yet, *in that thought*, still was the treasure losing.

Lost day! lost hour!
Wherein our strength, our breath, our life were wasted:
Had we in them gain'd power
Of soul, or of the UNENDING MYSTERY tasted,
They were not lost; for upward thus to tend
And grow to God, is surely our great end.

Time is my wealth;
And, like a miser, still I count it o'er:
By fair means or by stealth,
I ever would be adding to my store.
But, O most miser-like! for want of use
My hoarded treasure turns to base refuse.

Time steals away
From our flesh-encumber'd minds, which cannot hold it;
And sleep and empty play
Hang on our life like vestments and enfold it.
E'en *this* hour is not mine; for see! it is gone,
Full of regrets for what had already flown.

Why mourn lost time?
The immortal spirit knows no calendar!
And in the invisible clime
No dial tells of the fleeting messenger.
The earth alone is mark'd with shade and night;
Beyond its bourn all is day and light.

Fleet, fleet away,
Days, months and years until ye have no meaning,
But are lost in endless day;
When light and glory, whereof we have no weening,
Shall burst upon the disencumber'd mind,
Which shall see things with an eye that now is blind.

AT THE GRAVE OF MARGARET.

The waning moon weeps o'er thy grave dear Margaret,
Night's dewy tears hang on the bending grass.
O let me weep my sorrows o'er it too,
Though from each grave there come a vapory ghost
To pity my unfledged soul that cannot rise
To where in beauty thou, with the free, art soaring!—
O, I will worship thee with tears! with tears
I'll ever speak of thee; for only they
Can tell our thoughts of thee. Let no one say
That sorrowing is vain—since sorrow sleeps
In love; love is the joy of life, and sorrow
The essence of that joy:—
One drop of sorrow heals the troubled heart
More than a thousand tongues of consolation.
Sweet sorrow, still with thee O let me kneel
Beside this peaceful grave, and all alone!
Away all forms of custom, pomp and show,
And let no outward thing obstruct the flood
That gushes from my heart; but sunk into
A very dungeon of abstracted thought,
And with one sole idea in my mind
Of the sweet form that in peace is sleeping,
O let me bend—a weeping willow o'er it—
Till, tear by tear, this flesh thaw to the earth,
And, thought by thought, my soul steal from its prison,
Meeting beyond, in the unseen world of spirit,
With thee, beloved, sweet, lost, lovely being!

TO A BLACKBIRD;

THAT SINGS BEHIND THE HOUSE EVERY MORNING.

Soon as the morning's blind begins to draw,
While yet the sun is deep in his sea bed,
And the light above is neither his nor the moon's—
A dreamy light that neither sleeps nor wakes—
Thou ope'st thy throat, sweet bird, and thy mellow song
Comes like a trickling stream amidst my dreams,
Now drowsily heard, now lost, now full and clear,
Winning the soul from earth to its native heaven.
Thy notes fall like a dew upon the soul
That with the midnight revelling is parch'd,
Or like a balm, drop, dropping on the brain
That fever'd is and sick of sense indulged.
The hot-eyed, drunken wight slips from his den,
And slinks through street and alley to his home;
The chastity of morning shames him, and thy voice
Strikes to his deaden'd heart, awaking thoughts
Of innocence—child-thoughts—that he deem'd dead:
Thou minister of Heaven! unto thee
He listens and repents his evil ways.

SELF-SUMMONING.

Be it our custom to retire inside
The framework of our being and isolate,
Within ourselves, a higher self, to mark
The working of the soul's machinery:
Thereby the erring wheels touch and adjust,
And make our minds in truthful action work.

We are as watches and do ever tend
To waver into misbelief and error;
From seconds brief, unnoticed, on to minutes,
And, if not touch'd in time, to hours; and then
We have to stop and scour away the rust
That, unperceived, corrodes our delicate springs,
Wastes our fine works away, unfitting us
For thoughts or deeds of any worth or beauty.

I am so sceptical, so given to forget
Or unbelieve things that I once believed;
So prone to err and break good resolutions,
That I ever need a summoning of myself.
And in these silent summonings I've found,
There is no safety for our erring souls
But a constant living with the INVISIBLE—
A feeling of GOD in all we see or hear—
A heart so full of GOD that all other light
Is shorn, as the stars by the god-like sun,
And all the little idols that we worship
Are lost, all lost, in this love of the ONE—
A knowing that, wherever we may go,
Whatever may befall us, still is GOD
There with us and within us and about us,
A DEEP SERENITY into whose bosom,
In our affliction, we, at any time,
May fall and be at peace.
O could we keep
Such truth before us ever, such close living
With our dear GOD, 'twere as impossible
For us to err as for the constant dial,
Whereon the sun—time's god—notes truthful warning.

FRAGMENTS OF A MEDITATION.

I have a clinging to the joys of earth
That lowly live within the animal.
But there are joys that be *not* of the earth—
Pure things of mind, having no kin to flesh.
Two tides are these that flow the world over,
Whose waters are apart, yet seem to mingle.
I envy him who can embark on either,
For surely he is happier than I
Whose love so equal is and so divided
That I'll take neither, neither will take me,
But leaves me, like a bark without a pilot,
To drift and veer with the humour of the wind.

Between two streams there flows a backward current,
With eddies and with dimpling pools beset;
Which runs to nowhere, for its ending is
A losing of itself. He that is cast
On this is lost to earth and Heaven: such
I know am I: this shrinking of the soul,
This going into nothing—tell they not
The losing of myself?

Is there no strength in mind, no firm-fix'd rock
That may withstand the opposing floods o' th' brain,
And turn them as it lists? Is there no WILL?
Can strange upturnings of philosophy
Sweep from the mind the natural sense of freedom,
And tell us we are tools in the ARTIST'S hand?
And are our souls but rays of the MIGHTIEST,
Moved by the one GREAT MIND?—We know thee not
Poor soul! nor what, nor whence we are! And all
That priest or sage or poet, hath said or written,
Is to the unknown and all-knowing GOD,
The babble of a child.

What seek we here? what means this earth? this body?
And where, and what the end to which we hasten?
O flesh! it cannot be for thee we live;
For all thy joys, desires and appetites
Are counterfeits—sweetmeats that tempt our taste,
But turn to loathsomeness and disappointment.
Thou art of earth, and must to earth go down.
Our truest joys are those that need thee not—
Cool musings in the mind's deep cavern,
'Mid Thought's upbubbling wells, hid from the world;
Or high upsoarings of the heaven-wing'd soul,
That now looks up to an infinite height,
Imagining it sees a seat of rest,
But anon the placid height is under foot,
And a higher overhead: thus ever, ever
Soaring and seeking—finding and wanting more;
And hoping ever, knowing there *is* more.—

Unfold the web of all our earthly bliss
And 'tis a tissue of enwoven hopes.
The soul's pure joys are the bright living thoughts
That cut down world's ambition in our hearts,
That pierce through life and death, and stretch, unending,
Into the deep infinitude beyond.

Let such our joys be ever, and that life
We look for after this, will be ours now,
And death come o'er us like a wakening,
That gives strength to the limbs which in our dream
Bent under us.

LADY MARGARET.

Wild Boreas, wi' an eerie crune,
  Is driving ower the hills o' Seidlie;
Loud the thunder roars abune,
  And rends the air wi' awsome medlie.

The lichtnin' loups in ilka glen,
  The drenching clouds are black and drearie,
The burn is brawlin' through the den,
  The far-aff sea moans hoarse and eerie.

The lady sits in her lane ha',
  List'ning the winds, and deeply sighing;
A bairnie—bonnie lauchin' thing—
  Upon the lady's knee is lying.

"O but this is a weary nicht
  For us, my babe, to be alane!
Ohon! whar may thy daddie be?
  Whar may the strife o' war hae gane?

"'Twas but yestreen I dream'd a dream—
  An awsome dream—nae guid forbodin';
Tartans, dyed wi' purple stream,
  Lay thickly strew'd upon Culloden."

And aye the lady musing sits,
  And aye the tears come in her eye;
When though the ravings o' the storm,
  She, startled, hears a feeble cry.

"If this be house o' friend or foe,
  If there be ony ane within,
O think upon this awfu' nicht,
  And ope the door and let me in.

"O whether ye be friend or foe,
Ye'll let the past forgotten be;
I only ask a sheltering bield
Where I may close my weary ee."

"Now wha be ye at my ha' door,
When Boreas blaws sae loud and surly?
The Gaberlunzie, auld and puir?
Or some auld doited singin' carlie?"

"O let me in! O let me in!
O let me in, thou kind, kind ladie!
O think ye o' the sleetie rain!
And think ye o' my bluidie plaidie.

"O were I at my ain ha' door,
And were I near my ain dear ladie!
I wadna mind how winds should roar,
Nor wad I mind my bluidie plaidie."

"O wha be ye at my ha' door?
And what can mak ye mourn sae sairly?
Do ye ken aucht o' my guidman?
Or ken ye aucht aboot Prince Charlie?"

Nae answer did the mourner gie!
The ladie, list'ning, heard him musin';
Now faint and low, now loud and hie,
In raving words o' dark confusion.

And vow the ladie's heart was sair,
To hear a voice sae sad and waesome;
While faint and fainter grew his groan,
Till it faintly left his weary bosom.

Now Lady Margaret has come down,
But ah, the broken-hearted ladie!
It was *nae* Gaberlunzie man,
Lay, streekit in a bluidie plaidie.

"And is it then my ain guidman!
And is it then my bairnie's daddie!
Ah no! ah no! it canna be!"
Then sank she on his lifeless bodie.

AULD JOHN BROON.

Auld John Broon, he's a hunder near!
He says he'll be dead ere the tail o' the year;
But for twa or three years he has said the same,
And we hae him yet in our cosie hame—
A snug cottar hoose on the edge o' a muir,
Wi' a theekit ruif and an earthern fluir.

In the big arm-chair, by the ingle cheek,
He sits a' day amid the blue reek;
His auld broad bonnet upon his croon,
Wi' twa or three white locks stragglin' doon;
His big auld shune that were made lang syne,
Ere his feet and kuits began to crine;
His ribbit stockins o' a purple hue;
His cloutit knee-breeks, his auld coat o' blue,
Wi' buttons on't like the rising mune—
Gude sakes! that coat will ne'er gang dune!—
The lee-lang day, and aye the auld seat,
Wi' his hands on his staff, and his staff 'tween his feet,
And his chin on his hand, and his head bent doon,
Sunk into himsel' sits auld John Broon.

His words are few, for he seems to care
But little for this warld and a' its gear:
It may be his mind is maist part awa
To yon Heaven that will ere lang hae it a':

But at times it comes back, wi' a beauteous glow,
And ower his auld features seems to flow,
Laving them like a limpid stream,
While youth comes ower him like a dream.
But it flushes awa as it came, and then
He sinks back into himsel' again.
And whiles he'll fa' into a dozing sleep,
Now licht and flickery, and now deep, deep;
Then he'll wauken and yawn fu' aft and wide,
And shake his head slowly frae side to side,
And mutter strange words into himsel'
That to us hae neither head nor tail.
The bairns creep stealthily round his chair,
And look up wi' a wondersome air—
Wi' awe-struck ee, and arch'd ee brou,
And staunin'-up hair, and gapin' mou'.
He looks at them wi' a glitterin' ee,
But ye canna weel tell whether he can see.
Though little he says, and does naething ava,
He is strangely felt by ane and a'.

Auld men and bairns are the gods o' earth,
When ower auld or ower young to utter forth
The soul within them; for we feel
A presence that words could not reveal;
And they work mair deeply upon the heart
Than a learned man wi' a' his art:
A dottle auld carle, or a babbling wean,
Into the midst o' yon wise folk taen,
Wad absorb the thochts o' every ane.
Had we een that could read, and heads that cauld learn,
We wad get deep lessons frae the auld man and bairn.

Auld John Broon, he sits at the fire;
Ye wad think he had nae ither desire—
But he isna deaf nor blind outricht,
When on his dull hearin', or on his dim sicht,
The voices and glances o' Nature alicht.

On simmer days, when we are a' gane
To the field, and he sits dozing alane—
Wi' nane but the lassie to mind the pat,
Tak' care o' the bairns, or the like o' that—
A sun-glint bursts through the winnock-pane,
And fa's ower his hand and on the hearth-stane;
It warms his heart, and he lifts his een
That glitter as he looks up to the sunsheen:
And he harks! for the laverock's notes on high
Come doon like dew draps fresh frae the sky,
Sprinkling the leas with melody;
And he hears the croak o' the passing craw,
Now harsh, now fading far awa';
And the clamour o' sparrows comes to his ear,
The keckle o' the hens, and chanticleer
Flappin' his wings and crawin' sae shrill
That he startles the gray rocks, asleep on the hill.
Ilk thing bursts out into joyousness—
Wha could bide in the hoose on a day like this?—
E'en restless grows the auld man there,
And he langs to get out into the sweet air:
Then wi' his staff and the lassie thegither,
He reaches the door, leaning on her shuither:
Ayont the door cheek is a stane bench where
She lats him cannily doon wi' care.

Bathed in sunsheen and balmy air,
He seems to enjoy the green earth ance mair,
Wakenin' frae out o' his aged swoon,
Maist thinkin' himsel' to be *young* John Broon.
Were thae limbs as they were wont to be,
He wad up and dance aboot wi' glee:
His *will* loups up, but his banes keep him doon,
And tell him that he is *auld* John Broon.

Sweet day ye hae dune what naething else can,
Ye hae brought back the speerit o' this auld man.
But it comes and goes as the weather may be;
He droops or looks up like the flower on the lea.

And ower his existence he has nae power—
He is guided by the hand that guides the flower.
Nae count, nae care, nae pain has he;
He never was ill, and he never will be,
And death will come saftly and close his ee:—
Spirit slip up—body lie doon—
That will be the end o' Auld John Broon.

HEAVEN AROUND US.

Green earth! blue sky! bright sun! calm day!
Cool, kindly airs that about us play!
There's a spirit in and throughout you all
That creepeth into the earth-clad soul,
Washing its earthiness away
Till it hath forgotten its house of clay,
And telling that death can be no loss:—
O bless the spirit that blesseth us!

Be joyous all! ah, why should we fear?
Heaven and God are around us here.
Our earthly vision earth only seeth—
Not what's within and about and beneath.
Let us look at things with our spiritual eyes,
For within and about them Heaven lies.
Dream not that we may lose the way
To God: we *cannot* go astray:—
Death comes—flesh falls—earth's bond is riven—
The wondering spirit is in Heaven!

NO END.

There is no *ill* the worst,
Or any *good* the best,
Nor, though we roam, will we ever come
To the ends of the east or the west.

Our seeking hath no end—
The end is but a beginning;
And a *will-o'-wisp* that eludes our grasp,
Is the goal we are ever winning.

Each step and strain of the eye
Opens out a new horizon;
And every day throws in our way
Something new to grow more wise on.

O show me an end to knowing,
Where mind hath no new seeing,
And then I will sigh to think we may die
And go utterly out of being.

REVELATION.

Powers that have been discover'd,
Work'd on the earth before:
When eyes are more uncover'd
Powers they will see more.

All truth that is to come
Has been with God for ever;
And constantly from Him
It runs through us as a river.

Truth needs no seeking after;
It bubbles up like a spring:
Shake the earth from our souls, the clear water
Comes through them rippling.

O choke not our soul's channels
With what Time has about us flung,
And newness will come upon us,
And we shall be ever young.

WE ARE FRUIT TREES ALL.

O we are fruit trees all,
With blossoms cover'd over,
Which bloom and make great promise,
But fall and come to nothing.

Thus are we cover'd over
With hopes and big intentions,
And aspirations beautiful
As is the fruit tree's blossom.

But bleak winds come and shake us,
And biting frosts that nip us;
And worse than all the canker worm
That is born of ourselves:
It hollows the young bud's heart,
Though it leave a fair outside.

And still we rejoice in our blossom,
And think of the fruit it will yield.
The season of fruit is come:
Alas! no fruit is there.

The sweet buds wither'd and dwindled,
And lessen'd unnoticed away—
As if they shrank into the tree;
For we did not see them fall.

Perchance a bud or two
May come to maturity;
But they hang unseen on the barren bough,
And we pity the fruitless tree.

But be our hearts not shaken
Though our fruit be nipt in the bud:
There is no end to our blossoming,
Be we but strong within.

Let us *think* the power is in us—
If we would put it out—
To turn the winds of heaven,
To thaw the frosts of earth;
That a gall is in the will
To poison the canker-worm:
And *thinking, feeling* thus,
Gives us the power.

But if when all our strength
Is wasted, there should be
Some wishes, aspirations,
Beyond our bringing out;
Then are they too fine things
To be matured here,
And are as roots and seeds
That will shoot up with the soul
Amid the pure air of Heaven.

OUR WEALTH IS WITHIN US.

I stood in the market place
Where busy merchants were;
But sorrow and discontent
Arose within my breast.

The stream of wealth ran there,
And they were as green rushes—
They that its waters laved;
But where I stood it took a turn
And left me poor and dry.
I had no art to bring it near,
No winningness of speech,
No kindred wealth to attract it;
So I stood unwater'd, and the ground
About me was so parch'd
That vegetation shunn'd me in a circle.

In this desertedness my heart gave way,
My existence seem'd to shrivel up
And smoulder into ashes.
I felt as an incumberance,
And wish'd myself away.

But from that smouldering ash a germ sprang,
Expanding into life,
And I felt a new creation coming o'er me;
And those around, among whom I was insignificance,
I bounded now:
Their wealth and themselves were mine.
My eyes were turn'd inward and I saw
That the world was in my soul,
That I had mines of wealth,
Awaiting to be wrought.

Fortune is not without us at a distance;
It is within us here.

And he that *chaseth* wealth,
Chaseth a shadow that escapes him.
But let him stand, he finds
That shadow is his own;
That all he follow'd, fought for,
Flow'd out of himself.—
Look in! look in!
And know ye that the mind is all that is:
And knowing, feeling it is all,
Then have ye all.

I did not dream such wealth
Was in the market place;
But sure it is—amongst the wheels of trade:
Yet great ones pass it by;
And only we, the friendless, poor, despised,
Can truly gather it.

SPIRIT SEEKS UP.

Spirit seeks up—body seeks down:
Were it not for the unseen tie
Between the two, we should be ever
Pure and lofty, and lowly never.
O, we cannot look on high,
But aye the wants of flesh come on,
Dragging the spirit down.

Strange, strange, that such a light wing'd thing
Should be so clogg'd with clay!
Yet there are moments when we seem
To have no flesh, when, like a dream,
Our earth-life is away:
We feel amid the air, and wonder
Why we could live under!

O, let no longing of the flesh,
For, rest, or food, or drink,
Break on my spirit-life; for now,
For the whole earth, I would not bow
My upturn'd head, or sink
Down to my frame which waits below
And will not all let go.

Moments of spirit-life, are ye
Not glimpses of that *whole*,
Which thus at times upon us falls
Through openings in the earthly walls
That bound the prison'd soul?
And when those earthly barriers fall,
O shall we then see *all?*

WE ARE EVER GETTING.

Things come into us, and we know not
When they come or how:
We know not what's within, nor what
We are getting now.

O let our eyes be ever open,
And our bosoms wide;
Beauty is ever on us laving,
Like an incoming tide.

A flood of beauty is about us,
Pressing to get in,
Through cracks and crannies of our senses,
To the deep cave within.

Not to be lost—though lost it seem—
Only to slumber long,
And out in after days to stream
In gushes of sweet song.

Y⁸ THREE VOYCES.

Y⁶ glasse was at my lippe,
  Clere spirit sparkling was;
I was about to sippe
  When a voyce came from y⁶ glasse:—

"And would'st thou have a rosie nose—
  A blotchëd face and vacant eye—
A shakey frame that feeblie goes—
  A forme and feature alle awry—
A bodie rack'd with rheumie paine—
A burnt-up stomach, fever'd braine—
A muddie minde that cannot thinke?
    Then drinke, drinke, drinke."

Thus spoke y⁶ voyce and fledde,
  Nor any more did say;
But I thought on what it saide,
  And threw y⁶ glasse away.

Y⁶ pipe was in my mouth,
  Y⁶ first cloude o'er me broke;
I was to blow another,
  When a voyce came from y⁶ smoke!

Come, this must be a hoaxe!
  Then I'll snuffe if I may not smoke;—
But a voyce came from y⁶ boxe!
  And thus these voyces spoke:—

"And would'st thou have a swimmie hedde,
  A smokie breath and blacken'd tooth?
And would'st thou have thy freshnesse fade,
  And wrinkle up thy leafe of youthe?
Would'st have thy voyce to lose its tone—
Thy heavenly note a bag-pipe's drone?—

If thou would'st thy health's channels choke,
  Then smoke, smoke, smoke;
Ye pipes of thy sweet musick stuffe,
  Then snuffe, snuffe, snuffe!"

Thus spoke, and fledde they both.—
  Glasse! pipe! boxe! in a day
To lose them, was I loath;
  Yet I threw them alle away.

O would we be alle healthe, all lightnesse,
Alle youthe, alle sweetnesse, freshnesse, brightnesse—
  Seeing through everythinge,
  With mindes like ye crystal springe—
O would we be just right enoughe—
Not drinke—not smoke—not snuffe.

Then would our forwarde course
  To ye right be as naturall,
As it is, withouten force,
  For stones downwarde to falle.

LET US REJOICE THAT WE ARE POOR

Let us rejoice that we are poor
    And have no gold to keep:
We do not need to bar the door
    Ere we can go to sleep:
Who bars his door doth bar his mind,
And shuts it against human-kind;
Even the turning of a key
Contracts the mind's humanity.

We have no way of getting wealth
    And therefore should be glad;
For Mammon-worship might by stealth
    Creep o'er us if we had:

And then our hearts could love no more
The beauteous things we love, and o'er
Our eyes would grow a golden rust,
Till we could nothing see but dust.

Gold wonderfully warps the mind,
    It strangely shifts the light
That things hang in, turns almost blind
    The pure and natural sight:
But naked truth and beauty lie
Unfolded to the poor man's eye.
Poverty keeps the vision pure—
Let us rejoice that we are poor.

SWEET GOOD MORROW.

Fair ones, fair ones, fare-you-well—
  The steamer leaves—we part:
Now Mary, Jane, and Isabel,
  And Jessie, next my heart;
And Chirstie, Barbara, and Ann,
  I leave with mickle sorrow;
I can't cheer up, do all I can,
  So, maidens, sweet good morrow.

Though Barbara is far from fair,
  Her *voice* all failing covers;
And gentle Jane has beauties rare,
  But wastes them with her lovers.
Chirstie, ah more than all beside,
  Has bred me pain and sorrow;
For her I would not choose to bide,
  So bid her—sweet good morrow.

Mary is liked by every one,
She is so fat and easy;
But there be few that doat on Ann,
She is so devilish teasy.
Yet I have loved her too at times,
In joy as well as sorrow;
And therefore is she in the rhymes
Of this, my last good morrow.

Jessie is fairest of them all,
Though just a shade too dumpy;
And Isabel is rather tall,
And also rather rompy.
Yet these are two would make me stay
Were't not, unto my sorrow,
High time, indeed, to be away—
So, maidens, sweet good morrow.

JOHN DAVISON AND TIB HIS WIFE.

John Davison and Tib his wife
Sat toastin' their taes ae nicht,
When something startit in the flair
And blinkit by their sicht.

"Guidwife," quoth John, "did ye see that
moose?
Whar sorra was the cat?"
"A moose?"—"Ay a moose."—"Na, na,
Guidman,
It wasna a moose, 'twas a rat."

"Ow, ow, Guidwife, to think ye've been
Sae lang about the hoose,
An' no to ken a moose frae a rat!
Yon wasna a rat! 'twas a moose."

"I've seen mair mice than you Guidman—
An' what think ye o' that?
Sae haud your tongue an' say nae mair—
I tell ye it was a rat."

"*Me* haud my tongue for *you* Guidwife!
I'll be mester o' this hoose—
I saw't as plain as een could see,
An' I tell ye it was a moose."

"If you're the mester o' the hoose,
Its I'm the mistress o't;
An' *I* ken best what's in the hoose—
Sae I tell ye it was a rat."

"Weel, weel, Guidwife, gae mak' the brose,
An' ca' it what ye please."
So up she rose and made the brose,
While John sat toastin' his taes.

They supit and supit and supit the brose,
And aye their lips play'd smack;
They supit and supit and supit the brose,
Till their lugs began to crack.

"Sic fules we were to fa' out, Guidwife,
Aboot a moose"—"A what!
Its a lee ye tell, an' I say again
It wasna a moose, 'twas a rat."

"Wad ye ca' me a leear to my very face?
My faith but ye craw croose!
I tell ye, Tib, I never will bear't—
'Twas a moose"—"'Twas a rat"—"'Twas a moose."

Wi' that she strack him ower the pow—
"Ye dour auld doit, tak' that—
Gae to your bed ye canker'd sumph—
'Twas a rat"—"'Twas a moose"—"'Twas a rat."

She sent the brose caup at his heels'
As he hirpled ben the hoose;
Yet he shoved out his head as he steekit the door,
And cried, "'Twas a moose, 'twas a moose."

But when the carle fell asleep
She paid him back for that,
And roar'd into his sleepin' lug,
"'Twas a rat, 'twas a rat, 'twas a rat!"

The diel be wi' me if I think
It was a beast ava—
Neist mornin' when she sweepit the fluir
She faund wee Johnnie's ba'!

GO HOME, GO HOME.

It is closing hour—I will work no more.
Now time is my own since my work is o'er.
I hear the laugh of the merry soul
And long to join at the smoking bowl:
I see the pots of sparkling beer
And long to dip my lips in their foam:
But a little song rings in my ear,
And its burden is, "*Go home, go home.*"

'Tis a little song, but full of sense—
The cream of deep experience.
It bothers not with philosophy,
And gives no reason *how* or *why*.

It tells what we know but seldom note—
That we never repented of going home;
And with a lark's untiring throat,
It sings "*Go home, O do go home.*",

I may not heed this little strain—
For oft it sings to me in vain.
But I ne'er was deaf to its pleading yet,
And pass'd untroubled with regret.
O, would my heart had aye been strong
And shunn'd the snares that o'er us come,
And listen'd to the little song
Whose burden is, "*Go home, go home.*"

THE LIGHT OF STARS.

The soul feels kindred in the light of stars,
And draws unto their glory near and far—
The big orb'd glow of Jupiter and Mars,
To yonder winking weak-eyed star
That weeps alone in the cold north,
A lowly one of neglected worth.
And Venus, the queen star, that tempts, at eve,
Young hearts to worship in the west and weave
Soft thoughts into soft songs,
Musing upon the love of woman—
Sweet dream that most belongs
To the melting hour of gloaming:—
Or when, like spirit rising from the sea,
She comes at morn to wake the sleeping earth,
And breathes her sweet breath o'er the drowsy lea,
While waken'd mountains pant with hope, as forth
She comes to tell them of the breaking day,
And larks are up and carol in her ray:—

They love her for their green earth loveth she,
Awaking it at morn, and at even
Putting it to sleep: most lovingly
Their little throats sing to the queen of heaven.—
O beauteous, glorious star! we have not room
Of soul to take thee in, of mind to put thee
Within us wholly; and striving to consume
In love-draughts, we are drown'd in a flood of beauty.

Good orbs, we cannot love enough your light!
It bathes our gazing eyes till their thick sight
Sees God; and then we know, or dream,
Of higher being, closer life with Him:
And seeing ye, so silent and serene,
O'erwatching us, we wonder what can mean
Our earth, our life, our little history,
So full of bustle, so unlike to ye.—
We who are tied to earth see only part,
Which seems confusion: when the unbound heart
Gets into higher place, then more is seen:
Among the stars, we'll see what earth doth mean.

Light draws unto it darkness—we are dark—
And whilst our eyes draw to the stars, and mark
This fascination in the face of night,
Our souls draw to a light *within* star-light.
And darkness drawn to light grows light; our eyes,
Our souls grow light; and all that near them lies
Is drawn within the lustre of their sphere,
Till earth and life grow beautifully clear.

SONNET.

WRITTEN ON MAY MORNING.

O, wherefore should I write, when these my lines,
  May ne'er be read; if read, forgotten quite?
Wherefore the earth encumber with dead signs,
  That to the generations give no light?
Hark! from yon sunny cloudlet come the notes
  Of one that carols not for me or you:
The oldest beauty of creation floats
  Into his breast, and gushes out anew.
Green earth! sweet air! blue sky! what worshipper
  Can hold his voice on this all-beauteous day?
Young May is in the meadow playing her,
  And all the world a-wooing is young May.
She doth bewitch her lovers; whoso yields
  Unto her spell, straight "babbles of green fields."

I WOULD THOU WERT MORE BEAUTIFUL.

I do love beauty! thou hast all
  That man could wish, save this:
I would thou wert more beautiful,
  Or that thy worth were less.
Pardon, deal soul, and O forgive
  My want of charity:
'Twas love—and yet 'twas want of love—
  That raised this wish in me.

I would thou wert more beautiful,
  Or that mine eyes were blind,
That I might know thee only by
  The beauty of thy mind.

O it is gentle, kind and pure—
Most womanly and true!
I love thee—yet I cannot love
As lovers ought to do.

I would not wrong thee with but half
Of a devoted soul:
A lover's heart were little worth
Unless thou hadst the whole.
Then waste no love on me, but turn
Thy doting heart away:
And what in thee I cannot love,
Some one more blessed may.

FAITH IN DESPONDENCY.

My being grows to earth, and the quick soul
Doth day by day grow weaker; a gross heap
Of evil thoughts, impure imaginings,
And that thick stupor, of indulgence bred,
Weighs on me like a world and keeps me down;
And that which we suppose most free—the mind—
Is choked and buried by gross qualities.
No good deed presses through me, no clear thought
Wells like a spring within, but all thick, rank,
And stagnant as yon puddle, is my brain.

Bad, let alone, grows good and beautiful,
And things that we have marr'd and spoil'd grow right,
When to the silent WORKER of the universe
Our meddling hands give place. Yea, even from
The refuse and the leavings of the earth,
That lie corrupting—when the poisonous steam
Hath dried into the all-absorbing air,

And He hath breathed within—do flowers spring,
And herbs of rarest virtue.—From this time
I'll add no more to the corrupted mass
That is my mind, but let the ferment cease,
And the good SPIRIT that moves in flowers and trees,
May come into the dark cells of my brain,
And pour again the light which they have lost,
And with His gentle, unperceivëd touch,
Make that as snow which is as foul as sleet,
And that most living which is now most dead.

O all unhealthy seems the air I breathe,
All cloudy and all hopeless seems my sky;
And I could e'en despair and give all up
But for my certain faith in the good SPIRIT
That righteth all we leave into His hand.

THE WORLD'S FALSENESS.

Had'st thou, O World, aught of a lasting nature;
Did'st taste as sweet as thou art sweet to see;
O if thy heart bore out thy outward feature,
Then would I live for thee.

But thou art false! thy pleasures leave us longing;
Our longings, got, are not what we desired:
We throng towards things that fade and mock our throngings—
Shadows that leave us tired!

And I am wearied of them! I have follow'd
Earth's vanities too long; all earth can give,
Have tasted; its deep draughts of joy have swallow'd,
Yet discontented live!

Its sweetest sweets, half tasted, turned sour;
E'en lasting sweets brought loathing with their sweetness;
Most potent spells of pleasure lost their power—
Showing their incompleteness.

Most treacherous ice is all around! to which
A venturous thought is e'en too great a load;
And all gives way beneath our shivering touch,
Until we come to GOD.

And even HE may be a dream! Our faith,
Our love of HIM, our wonder and our trust,
May into air, by the bleak wind of death,
Be blown away as dust.

Yet in this doubt is there not more reality
Than in the most substantial thing of sense?
Not more of truth and heart-sustaining quality
Than aught else can dispense?

O, nothing is more real! all beside,
Our breath can blow away; but this it cannot.
And, knowing nought so strong in the world wide,
O why not rest upon it!

TO MY BELOVED.

Nought can destroy thy love! it clings to me,
'Midst my neglect and infidelity.
I've used no art to live in thy mind's heaven—
Have been unkind—yet thou hast ever striven
To be my comforter and guiding star.

I've follow'd vanities, and banish'd far
All thought of thee; and yet thy love's clear eye
Would bide upon me, seeming to defy
All earth to make me worthless in thy sight!
O thou, the very moon of my dark night!
I've been most faithless to thee—yet, for all,
Thou art my loadstone—wilt not let me fall
From thy love's circle, O what mystery
Can bind thy love to one who is to thee
So great a prodigal? O love most pure,
Whose heat amid such coldness can endure!
Not for the barter of my love thou givest
Thy soul's affection, but myself thou lovest;—
Dreaming there is in me that which is not,
Or which thy fine eyes see beneath the blot
That hides me from myself. If there be aught
In me that's worthy of thy love, 'tis that
Rich, most rich gift—*To know thy goodliness.*
O!—if not lost—I am but saved by this.
In my worst hours, thy worth shows to me most;
It comes like moonlight on the wrecking coast,
Illumining the blindness of the skies,
And showing heaven where earth's trouble lies.
Yet though thy rays seem to my moty eyes
More beautiful, when thus they darkly find me,
I'd have thee *always*, though thy light should blind me!
For now I see thou art my only treasure:
In having thee I have the heap'd-up measure
Of all earth's glory—since there is in thee
That which turns gold to dust, and makes it flee
Like breath away; the having of broad fields,
To that of the bare rock which nothing yields;
The pride of riches and the pomp of ruling,
To blind insanity and idle fooling.
O, what a precious jewel then thou art,
That with thy touch canst purify the heart
From all these idols! O, thou cloudy brain,
Make thy thick atmosphere dissolve in rain,

And leave a heaven where this orb may shine
In constant lustre, and be ever mine!
For with such light upon my way, I ween
I could not be so lost as I have been.

And who, and what art thou, most excellent thing,
Whose names of *love, orb, jewel, treasure,* ring
Confusedly throughout my careless verse;
Whose virtues still I harp on and rehearse,
Setting as worthless to thy worth, all things,
From smallest havings to the crowns of kings?
Art thou the fair maid of a lover's vision—
To him all peerless; in the world's decision
But one of many? Nay! I cannot speak
Of thy hair's twining; or of thy soft cheek;
Or of the sea of love in thy deep eye;
Or of the inflaming music of the sigh
That makes thy breast heave; or of thy sweet lip,
Since of its sweetness never did I sip.
Wert thou a woman these might be my theme:
They are seldom absent from the lover's dream.
But woman thou art none—unless in spirit;
For all her heavenliness thou dost inherit,
Wanting her earth. Yet only those belov'd
By thee can see thy beauty, or be mov'd
By thy fine excellence; and *they* will know
The mystery of my speaking; *them* I show
What is most clear, although it seems to break
In struggles through me, labouring to take
A form to the sight. And these harsh words
But *hint* their message; yet that hint affords,
To those who are thy chosen, the full sense
Of that thou speak'st through me: this diffidence,
To them who know thy hints, is eloquence.
It is thy way of telling: in the woods,
The meadows, and the hilly solitudes,
Thou speakest thus, and choosest for thy voice,
The little throats that raise the piping noise

Which rings on summer days among green trees;
The coy leaves that with the frolicsome breeze,
Hold courtship i' th' forest, or to themselves
Tell whispering tales of fairy-land, and elves
That haunt their own wood in its dreamy places;
The joyous stream that through the meadow chases
Its own thought, like a child; the voice that comes
To his ear among the hills, when the poet roams,
Wrapt up in visions. Many a tongue beside
Thou tak'st from nature; but all mystified
They come to us—most musical in tone,
But dim in meaning, save to those alone
Who are thy gifted; *their* fine ear receives
The meaning which thy voice in mystery gives.

And to this mystery thou wouldst tune my ear:
But I am faithless to thee, and I fear
The World has too much of me to be thine
So wholly as to understand thy sign,
In its most secret meaning. Can I not
Shake off the earth that clogs my every thought,
And be all thine, who, with untiring love,
Wouldst one so very false and changeful have!

I would thee wed, and yet the World's I'd be;
But whoso weds the World can not wed thee!
Besides, *two* wives in one house cannot sit;
Then must I be the changeful *lover* yet—
Courting awhile the lewd smiles of the World,
Till, sick at heart and weary, I am hurl'd
From her false arms to seek relief in thee,
My ever sweet and faithful POESIE.

I LIKE MY GRAY SUIT.

I like my gray suit, its sae coothie, saft and warm;
It does for ony weather, be it sunshine be it shour;
In sleety wintertime its the colour o' the storm,
In sunnie simmer days its the colour o' the stour.
At ony time o' year, on ony kind o' day,
I never can be wrang in my suit o' hoddin gray.

I like my gray suit, its sae like the things I like;
It aye seems sae in keepin' wi' the woodlands and the hills;
It seems at hame by loch and burn and whinstane dyke,
And looks as if't had grown upon the muirland fells:—
The black-cock sits him still, nor starts out o' my way,
Sae freendly do I look in my suit o' hoddin gray.

I like my gray suit, it looks sae snod and clean:
To keep it deacent like needs neither fyke nor fash:
If it tak' on dirt ava, the fient a speck is seen;
It never looks the waur, and never needs a brush.
It mayna be sae braw as black or blue, but they
Could never stand the wear sae weel as hoddin gray.

I like my gray suit, though a puirish look it has:—
The man should be ashamed to borrow frae the coat;
And, seen aricht, our claes and hooses are but glass,
For *clear* een look clean through them—its the man
inside they note.
Folk needna mind the motty een whase dust bedizzen'd ray
Sees naething but the puirish look that's in the hoddin gray.

I like my gray suit for reasons monifauld,—
But maist of a', because my Peggie likes it too:
She ca's me "ROBIN GRAY"—but keeps awa the "AULD"—
And dauts my shuither kindly when I come to woo.
Her heart beams in her een, whilk sparklin' seem to say,
"Ah! weel I like to see ye in your suit o' hoddin gra·

THE LONELY ISLE.

I know an isle in the desert sea,
Where many a time I long to be.
Like a child in its mother's lap it lies,
Basking beneath the tropic skies;
While the fondling waves that round it creep
Seem hushing the innocent to sleep:
And nothing is there to break its rest;
Only the breeze from the sighing West
Comes lifting among its shrubs and weaves
A whispering spirit through its leaves.

O never comes summer with its steady breeze
And sunny skies, but the deep blue seas
Come over my heart and sweep away
All love of this world and our worky day—
And needless seems the work we do
When we lose the end we work unto:—
I grow idle and dreamy, and long to be
Afar on this isle of the desert sea.

Ah, what a lone desire is this!
No one is there to share the bliss
That dwells among the loneliness!
No living soul hath touch'd its sod—
No being there, save our lonely God!
A place where a silent God may brood,
Unknown in the ocean's solitude.

Great God! what loneliness to be
As Thou art! O, no one with Thee
To speak a neighbour's mind! Alone
From first—and to be aye unknown!—
Such loneliness would wither up
Our souls like autumn leaves, and stop
The growth that seems to grow to Thee;

And like the autumn leaves we'd be
Withdrawn by wearisome decay,
And all unnoted waste away!
We are not meant for such a life,
Are born, and must be bred, in strife;
Trusting the end may come to good,
Though now so dimly understood.

Sleep on, then, in sunshine and calm,
Sweet Isle, I would be where I am.

THE POET'S THIRST.

A thirst for immortality:
  And could I write one line
That after days might not let die,
But lisp it when in earth I lie,
    And call it *mine;*
Then would I live content to be
My life-time in obscurity;
Then would I die content although
All else of me to nothing go.

Strange thirst—to live in a few words,
  Yet of it not to know!
To bear the slights that life affords,
And all the much-hoped-for rewards
    Of Heaven forego:
All for this unfelt life in death—
No life to me, but others' breath!—
I'll thirst no more, but easy be
About this vague futurity.

Had we not Shakspeare with us still,
  This life were little worth:
And many a song comes like a rill
To slake our parched souls when ill
    With pains of earth.
'Tis good and right to minister
To others' wants, and make a stir
To push the work of mind along—
E'en by the cheering of a song.

But if't be *fame* thou singest for,
  O sing not; only sing
When the full heart is running o'er
With nature's spirit,—but no more;
    And then thou'lt bring
That to the needy earth it needs,
As rain or dew to summer meads.
God knows when earth wants, and will make
A spring from thy soul's cistern break.

And if this thirst, at any time,
  For after-life, in thee
Arise, seek not for it in rhyme,
Nor any trouble take to climb;
    Already we
Have that within which shall outlive
The longest fame that earth can give:
O know thy soul—that fount of thought—
Shall *be* when the great name *is not*.

IF THOU WOULD'ST BE A POET.

If thou would'st be a poet, and have a mind
For beauty and high thought, and be not blind
To the fine haze that floats throughout the earth
And gives to seeming worthless things great worth—
Thou must not only be temp'rate and chaste,
Keeping from all wild stimulants that waste
The soul's inborn strength—thou also must
Be in thy heart most true, honest and just;
Believing that the cheater cheats himself,
And loses though he gain a world of pelf.

Alas! that we should lose our trust in RIGHT,
And dream that there is any other light
But will mislead us! Let not such a dream
Be thine, dear friend. Put all thy faith in HIM
That breathes the RIGHT within us evermore:
For he that holds it not as his heart's core
Can be no poet truly. Earth to him
Is nought but earth, and Heaven far off and dim:
The mind-freeing mystery of Earth and Life
Is hidden from him, and the jar and strife
Of this work-world to him are what they seem:
He never dreams that they are but a dream.
This breeze that comes o'er the Atlantic wave
Brings nought but coolness to him; and the lave
Of ocean up the beach speaks with no tongue.
Nor is he like the poet, ever young;
Loving to bask on sunny banks at noon;
Or wondering at the big red rising moon;
Drunk with the glory of her midway sailing,
Or sadly, lonely, watching her light failing
When struggling with the blue waves of the west.
Nothing in Nature can his soul invest
With that fine web she weaves for poets' brains:
She *will* have true hearts, free from slavish chains.

Let not the World have any hold of thee:
Surround it quite. Deal not with cheatery.
Think deeply: briefly speak: and then—ah me!
I would, my friend, I were as thou wilt be.

THE DRUNKARD'S SONNET.

List friend and I will tell you what I am
Since to deep draughts I have myself given o'er.
My coat, you see, is bare, and a sad qualm
Gripes in my purse and makes it retch full sore:
This eye, that once was like the lustred star,
Is now a half-burnt coal; and this same face
That has no meaning in't, whose features are
Expression's grave, once mirror'd every grace:
The God-breathed soul that with a heavenly light
Illumed this flesh, is seared and scorch'd away:
All mind, all feeling, all impulsive might
Have stolen like vapour from this senseless clay.
Is not this all our Heaven that hath me left?
Is not this Hell—to *know* I am bereft?

SONNET.

O GOD, how dim thou growest to the sight!
Our faith in THEE doth ever need renewal,
As doth a fire its supply of fuel—
For both, without, will soon cease to be bright.

And we might deem THEE but a mist o' th' brain,
That fadeth in the sunlight of our reason;
But well I know the fault is in our vision,
Which, having had THEE, loseth THEE again.—
Our world is full of film; of motes our air;
To keep the vision clear is hard indeed;
Yet they who would see truly only need
Be free from these—then look, and GOD is there.
A clear eye cannot keep from seeing HIM:
When HE's unseen, let's know our eyes are dim.

THE LONE SOUL.

O if in this wide world there be no one
Whom thou, lone soul, may'st heap thy love upon,
What art thou then to do, since nought but this
Can ever bring thee into deeps of bliss?
There is no true bliss save in lavishing
Thy whole affection on some only thing:
For if love be divided it may die.
But thou, lone one, hast no such thing! no eye
Hangs on thee like a planet, drawing thee
Into the self-abandon'd ecstasy
Of adoration! nor a love-toned voice
Makes to thine ear all other music noise,
Shaming the fabled hymning of the spheres—
A voice whereon thou'dst dwell until thine ears
Forgot the knowing of all other sound.
No hand's soft pressure makes thy pulses bound
Into a trance of feeling so refined
That even thy very flesh becomes a mind,
And thou hast lost thy being in another.—
Ah, hadst thou one combining all these together,
Then mightst thou live the bliss, the want of which
Keeps thee the lonely soul.

But why not teach
Thyself to live as other mortals do?
And eat and drink and sleep thy earth's hour through,
Fall in with the World's humour, jest and rail,
Slander thy neighbour, laugh at the merry tale,
Believe in the supremacy of wealth,
Bow down before nobility, thy health
Leave to the doctor, let the parson keep
Thy soul, and, trusting him, let Question sleep.

Into the World's wheel thou canst never fall,
But hoverst on the rim, like the erring ball
That ever cometh in at the wrong place
And is spun off again. The World's race
Seems not to want thee. Like a sinful ghost,
No grave will have thee: yet methinks thou know'st
Full well the reason; ha! thou'lt have no grave!
And into the World's wheel thou wilt not crave
To get admission—even glorying
In thy exclusion, nourishing the sting
Which seems to breed thy pain, but which, indeed,
Is surely thy great joy,—else, wherefore need
All these thy wand'rings into places lone,
Wherein thou seem'st to breathe an air unknown
To us inside the World—a frenzied air
Which, creeping in thy brain, makes music there,
Sweeter and softer than the fairies make
At noon when sunshine sleeps in their green brake;
An air through which all visible nature seems
Fairer than that which poets see in dreams.—
It cannot be but thou art glorified
In these thy solitudes: the fenny side
Of some lone river, winding among sedge,
Where weary sea-birds, sitting on the edge,
Clamour the shrill air with their old-world cry,
And thou art strangely sad, yet know'st not why:
The hill-embosomed glen, so dusk and deep,
Where, over shelving rocks, the waters leap

And fret themselves to foam, which sends a shower
Of pearls through the glen, o'er leaf and flower,
And all seems in a spangling maze of dew:
The mountain ridge that looms so sharp and blue,
Where rugged clouds, like giants, stalk about,
In silence, like all power, yet working out
Thunders and winds that shake the ponderous globe:
The harkening wood, made twilight with its robe
Of slumbering leaves; wherein the slightest sound
Leaps to thy startled heart, and the hollow ground
Reveals its secrets to thy wakening tread—
Dim hints of fairy-land; whilst overhead
Thou look'st into a shady sycamore
And seest a little heaven in its core;—
The freshness of green leaves, the sunbeam's glory,
The unseen insects humming their unknown story,
Sink deep into thy soul;—sweet little heaven!
He never can to nothingness be driven,
Can ne'er be wanting of a fair earth-dower
Whose soul can live in thee one summer hour.

But 'tis not only when the lustry day
Wons in the woods that thou are temp'd to stray
Out of our ken into these solitudes,
But also when black night comes down and broods
Over the morrow's birth. Then wilt thou trace
Thy moody way into some shuddering place
Where only ghosts would enter. Ah, sad soul!
The city joins in revelry, the bowl
Steams through our blood and brains, from lighted halls
Gush out whole floods of music, and stone walls
Are rent with song and mirth! Thou mightst be here,
Yet art in darkness, taking into thine ear
The hum of all this gladness; fondly deeming
That all our joy is but a shallow seeming,
And that thy bosom holds a deeper mirth—
Ours ever dying, thine a constant birth—

Ours still a losing that which we have found,
But thine a gaining that which hath no bound—
Ours coming to stops at morn and noon and even,
Thine the expanding circle of blue heaven!
—— And truly there is no continuance
In our life's joy! it comes as if by chance:
It will not be impressed, but shuns our seeking.
The chain of earthly love is ever breaking;
And most dear friends are dearest when apart:
Thy presence, friend, is lead upon my heart:
Indeed I love thee; yet, I know not how,
I'd love thee better, if thou'dst leave me now.

Nothing that hath not all the soul is lasting,
But ever runs to weariness and wasting:
And all the soul can nothing earthly have—
Unless perchance a virtuous woman's love,
Or the passion that to poesie gives birth;—
But when *these* have the soul, earth is not earth;
And therefore of high heaven 'tis thought they are—
Kindred in beauty to the morning star,
Whose rising so enwraps our adoration
And brings o'er weary hearts a new creation.

But thou, lone one, hast no good woman's love,
Nor that fine power which draweth from above
The air in which the poet hath his breathing.
Yet in thy brain there seems a constant seething
Of spirit-element, and in thy breast
A joy, not quick and light, but all comprest,
Deep and devouring as a mother's eye
Hung o'er her sleeping child, and no one by.

We thought thee sad: that thought was form'd too soon!
Yet thou art lonely as the waning moon

That creeps with weary step and trembling horn,
Athwart our windows 'twixt the night and morn.
And yet thou art not all alone; me-seems
Thou art like him who walketh in his dreams
And seeith some one that we cannot see:
For though stone-blind to all we can, yet he
Is with mysterious presences. The skies
Are quick with throbbing life, though our weak eyes
See only voids of blue. To stronger gaze
The voids reveal a presence more than haze.

And is it then this strong far-reaching sense
That, shunning our littleness, withdraws thee hence,
Out of the human World, to brood apart
Upon the muffled beating of that HEART
Which moves the globes, and which thou deem'st is heard
Only in places from our World retired?—
Thy deeming is but dreaming! know thou this:
Thy GOD—man's GOD—shuns not our littleness.
Hark! 'tis but music and gay tred of feet:
Yet listen! Hear'st thou not that solemn beat
Amidst it all?—the same which fills thine ear
In solitude—there terrifying—here,
Choir'd in humanities and homely things,
From which it takes those plaintive murmurings,
Almost too fine for human souls to note:
Yet thou, with thy fine ear, might'st hear them float
Where we are all unconscious. Come thou in
From thy lone deserts, and fear not the sin
That so envelops us: thou'lt gain that part
Of man which thou most need'st—a human heart.
(And if GOD chiefly moves in any place,
It is the human heart). O wherefore chase
Thy vision into solitude? A LIGHT
Is in us and about us day and night:
It is not of, but that which lights, the sun;
And clear eyes see it streaming from each one.

The beating of that HEART which moves the spheres,
And which thy fine ear in the desert hears,
Is stronger *here;* and that mysterious LIGHT
Which draws thy searching eyes beyond our sight,
Is with us, even as the air; and, thus,
What thou art seeking most is most with us.
Come, then, amongst us, and thou may'st be moved
To love us, and, thus loving, be belov'd:
For all this life is flat and nothing worth
Till lapp'd in love as sunlight laps the earth.

THE COBWEB IN THE SKY.

There is a cobweb in the sky
  Weaved of spirit tether;
Earth and stars are link'd thereby,
  And all things bound together.
Past thoughts run through it, the gone years
Have work'd it full of joys and tears.

No thought once born can ever die,
  Each soul's particular story
Runs through this web of mystery,
  In endless gloom or glory;
And earth and air and stary places
Are netted o'er with human traces.

And thus it is that night and day,
  The sunshine and the showers,
And things that meet us on our way,
  Give something that is ours.
The winter's blast, the summer's breeze
Repeat our own heart's symphonies.

THE BLUSTERING NIGHT.

The wind burst like an enemy at night
Into our town, and battled in the streets,
While peaceful folks lay stretch'd in wakeful sheets:—
But bolted doors withstood the invader's might.

From street to street, in rumbling roaring din,
He madly ran, and batter'd at the gates,
Scaled the house tops and hurtled down the slates,
Push'd at the doors and clamour'd to get in.

The window-shutters to the wall he dash'd,
Howl'd through the window, rattled on the pane,
Rush'd up the entries, hurried back again,
Pull'd down the sign-boards and the street-lamps smash'd.

The town rock'd like a ship, and the alarm
Deafen'd the inside ear of all our houses:
We could not hear each other for wild noises,
And bawl'd aloud like sailors in a storm.

He raked the gables, toppled chimneys down;
And had done more, but lo! the Morning came:
Beneath her innocent eye he quail'd in shame,
Mutter'd a curse or two, and left the town.

We heard him, as he pass'd the eastern port,
Bully the subburbs. When he reach'd the leas
He tamed in valour to a simple breeze,
And whistled o'er the moors in rural sport.

LITTLE KATE.

A winking, blinking little thing,
  Full of deep-eyed witcherie ;
Full of artless rollicking,
  And ever busy as a bee;
Making all the house to ring,
  She is a very joy to me:
Waking, sleeping, early, late,
My heart is full of little Kate.

She fills the house with such sweet noise,
  That even a sage could not rebuke;
To listen to her silvery voice,
  I'd lay aside the wisest book;
And when I'd have my soul rejoice,
  Deep, deep into her eyes I look;
I quite forget my day and date,
And lose myself in little Kate.

I hear her voice at break of day,
  She's waiting for me when I wake;
And ever when I go away,
  She sobs as if her heart would break.
My darling Kate, I cannot stay,
  Or gladly would I for thy sake:
I would the flighty hours would wait,
And let me play with little Kate!

Coming home, I catch her tongue
  Ringing like a little bell,
Joyous as a linnet's song,
  Dulcet as a woodland well:

At the door I listen long,
  Lest my entrance break the spell;—
Ah, what a rattling, prattling state
Thy heart is in, thou little Kate!

She gives my days a sunny hue,
  She keeps me in a world of light;
She is to me a honey-dew
  That bathes my soul at morn and night,
And keeps my life so fresh and new,
  'T will ne'er grow old or suffer blight:
She's three, and I am twenty-eight,
Yet feel as young as little Kate.

Ah! would that Time might leave us so!
  But she'll grow old, and I'll grow strange:
Content with loves that round her grow,
  She seeks not yet a wider range:
But years will come, and years will go,
  And with the changing years she'll change:
Then through the shifting scenes of Fate,
I'll look in vain for little Kate.

SONNET.

(WRITTEN AFTER A THUNDER STORM.)

The dun clouds quiver'd and half gleam'd, as if
Red flame behind them flicker'd: from their wombs
The lightnings shot to life and instant tombs
In earth's green breast: then rattled, sharp and brief,
The musketry of heaven; and a boom
Went through the hills, and broke their slumber deep—
They lay like giants muttering in sleep.

Methought at last it was the crack of doom!
Both fire and flood seem'd battling which should have
Our sweet green earth; and she, all meekness, turn'd
Her fair cheek to them. They, too fiercely brave,
Wasted their fruitless strength, and pass'd away:
And earth, the patient and forbearing, earn'd
A triumph which Resistance never may.

SONNET.

You little know the man to whom you write—
Still less the nature of his friends. He looks
Around these shelves, and, from immortal books,
Whole hosts of choisest friends crowd on his sight.
These ever have been his: your puny might
Can not displace one friend; nor any deed
Of his, though jarring with your peevish creed,
E'er lose him one—his strength is *conscious* right.
He has besides a visionary ken
That holds a world of friends. On hearts of men
He has not built a hope of any height:
Withdraw them, and there is no ruin wrought.
Therefore you've used an unprophetic pen;
Your words are weak; he blasts them with a thought.

SONNET.

Whether my sonnet be of grief or joy,
It ever is preceded by depression—
A heaviness, like guilt before confession,
Which only in revealment finds alloy.

And when the sweets of earth begin to cloy,
And all the world seems barr'd to my progression,
I know my soul has in it a possession
Which *will* be out, or cause me great annoy.
And yet I know not what this is, or whence!
It gathers like a cloud and then disperses:
It comes uncalled, nor will be driven hence,
But, left unto itself, it runs to verses.
If in this sonnet I have found relief,
Then has it done good work, though poor and brief.

SONNET.

(WRITTEN IN MAY.)

The voice of poesie for many a day
Has been dumb in my breast, and heavy care
Has press'd upon it, like a foul nightmare,
And frighten'd all my fantasies away.
Shall I ne'er sing again? lo! it is May;
The earth's awake; her meadows, green and fair,
Are breathing out an ecstasy of pray'r,
And larks are ringing in the eastern ray.
O, ever blessed month! from olden time
Thou'st been a jubilee to poet hearts;
And they have revell'd in thee till their rhyme
Would sparkle as thy dew. He needs no arts,
Whose soul delights in thee, but, like a thing
Of nature, be resign'd, and he will sing.

OUR NEW-BORN.

O heard you not its little voice? That was
  Its first earth-cry—ah, when may be its last?
Our household echoes, at the unusual noise,
    Start, and seem all aghast.

Echoes, be not afraid; it is a voice
  That soon shall be the endearment of our home;
And ye will take it up as the most choice
    Reclaimer when I roam.

The nooks and corners will take up its grief;
  Or when it laughs and prattles, so will they;
But all shall be so sadly quiet if
    Our darling go away.

Come, little stranger—stranger be no more,
  But bide with us whom thou art come to bless.
As we o'er thee, so may'st thou yet watch o'er
    Our *second* childishness.

Let me not hold the thought that any fate
  Could take us from thee in thy infancy:
The World shuns poverty, and poor's thy state—
    Ah! who would care for thee?

But I'll not fear: upon the lonely hill
  The heather-bell and daisy grow up wild—
And O how beautiful! who tends them, will
    Not leave a helpless child.

Thou'rt come my darling to a beauteous earth,
  And thou wilt walk in wonder as I do:
Fine visions have been with me from my birth:
    They will be with thee too.

"WHAT PLACE IS THIS, MASTER?"

These words came from the Sleeper whilst a dream
  Moved o'er her face like sunshine o'er a plain.
Her marble features bore a sudden gleam,
  And settled into marbleness again:
Again, again lit up in gleams of bliss,
And seem'd in thought to ask 'What place is this?'

What place is this! O, sleeper, thou art here,
  Within the poor walls of thy simple home:—
Thou! thou! what thou? the mind? Yea, it is near—
  Else, how the thoughts that o'er thy features come?
I see them arch thine eyebrows, curve thy lips:
Thy soul is there behind: Sleep's an eclipse.

Thy mind, thy all, is here; then wherefore ask
  What place is this, when thou thyself can'st tell?
Does sleep make false or true, mask or unmask
  The things that, waking, thou wouldst know so well?
This finite side is dark; eclipsing sleep
Takes it, but gives thee all the infinite deep.

Thine is the Unseen that lies behind our Seen,
  The present and the past are in thy Now:
The waking memory pictures what has been,
  But falsely shadowyly to that which thou
Art seeing now. The Been can never die!
It wakes in sleep—sleeps in the memory.

If waking sense receives them as ideal,
  And holds a dream as that which only seems,
It is because it cannot get the real
  But only twilight glimpses of our dreams.
In dreams and day we doubt not—on their rim
The things of dreams and day are false and dim.

In perfect day there is no room for doubt,
  But tower and hill and tree seem what they are.
At dusk earth gets confused, things shift about
  And vaguely glimmer to the evening star.
Of day's realities what could *she* say,
Who sees them only in the dusk of day?

We may not know a dream but *in* a dream,
  And when awake we know not what we knew.
The shreds that skirt our waking, we can deem
  Nought but distorted shadows of the true.
It will not be brought *out* of sleep: we may
As well take *into* sleep the waking day.

Day-truths grow jumbled on the edge of sleep,
  And dance in motley to the closing eye:
In vain we strive their sequences to keep;
  But do we therefore hold day's truth a lie?
'Tween sleep and waking is a belt of night
We darkly cross and come again to light.

What place it is, or whom thou speakest to,
  Sleeper, I may not guess: I can but trace
The lines of light that dimly flicker through
  The dusky veil, and know there *is* a place.
O, Sleeper, thou art there! Within the Seen
There is a world the outward does but screen.

The Unseen bears the Seen up, like a bell
  Of rainbow hues that floats upon the river;
And could it be withdrawn, ah then farewell
  The things we doat on now. We are forever—
We and the world we cling to—all and we—
Resting on that we scarce believe to be.

We live outside the temple, looking in
Through trances of deep thought—half entering when
Sleep takes us from the world's restraining din.
But thought grows dim, and sleep brings back again.
O not until Death open the great door
Can we find entrance that leads back no more.

RECORDS.

I.

The records of a life should be a poem;
We need not go abroad for stones to build
Our monumental glory; every soul
Has in it the material for its temple.
The universal beauty is our own:
We steep our thoughts in sunsets, and we hang
Our adoration on the morning star,
And yet from us they get that alchemy
With which they strangely move us. Nought is ours
But that which has gone from us. Therefore it is
That disappointments often tread upon
The toes of expectation. Things without
Are bare until we clothe them. Let us seek
Each one our gods in our immediate heaven:
There is no breathing for us in another;
But either is the air too coarse and weighs
Like nightmare on our thoughts, or it is too fine,
And, like the atmosphere of mountain tops,
Usurps the brain, and finds insiduous way
Into its chambers, pressing out the soul,
Till death o'ercome us in the guise of sleep.

Yet all may grow to live upon the heights:
Deep thought and action of the soul make close
The fibres of the brain, so that no air,
However fine, can press the spirit out;
In time thus fitting us for another heaven
Above what was our own.

Our truest life
Is THOUGHT, high and sincere, and to ourselves:
When eyes are felt upon us we are players,
And life becomes untrue. We may not mark
The Poet's phrensy, when the stars and he
Are revelling in night, and all the winds
Are bringing music to their jubilee.
Did we but look in with unhallow'd eyes,
He would be all in darkness, and the stars
Beaming, unconscious, in their heavenly places,
And all the winds gone back into the forests.
So nothing of his phrensy can be known,
Save what his rhymes blab out to knowing readers—
And yet this phrensy is his truest life.

All of us, like the Poet, have our phrensy,
Only less flighty and more of the earth.
And is it not the heaven-light of our nature,
The fitful gleam of our true life, the sun,
Bursting the troublous clouds of our earth-sky?

True thought blends into beauty, and we all
Are poets when we reach it. Could we give
The records of this thought—this our true life—
The records of our life would be a poem.

II.

Bewilder'd in a maze of crowding themes,
O'erwhelm'd with multiplicity of books—
Each calling out "Lo, here! I am the way"—
And seeing more to do than can be done,
I idly stand, not knowing *what* to do:
And with a dim perception of a journey,
I loiter here in doubt which way to take.

Thou fool, do anything—take any way
That is not labell'd to thy conscience—*wrong;*
For all lead back unto one end, all run
Into one source, which is their source and thine.—
Know thou, the smallest atom is a door
Into God's temple, and if we but had
The secret of its opening, one step,
At anytime, would lead us into paradise.
And never doubt but that we are surrounded
With pleaders, great and small, that bid us come.
The heaving ocean everlastingly
With its big errand pants, and twice a day
Entreats a special hearing. Canst receive
That universal language? Listen well;
For all things speak it, and it is the tongue
That Spirits use:—
Yon silvery slipper'd brook
That with a ceaseless prattle from the hills
Comes nimbly tripping o'er the mossy stones,
Cannot contain its joy: "Come thou with me—
Into my being let thy spirit slip,
Gliding as in a dream, and I will take
Thee to the green banks of thy spirit home":—
The monarch sun that draws the adoring gaze
Of worlds has still a special word for man:
"Though outward light should blind thy outward eye,
Turn not thy gaze from me; thy inner orb

Will open to new seeing and new light;
And know thou this: the outward mortal is
A symbol of the inward everlasting":—
  The stars in their long watches of the night,
Are ever shedding incense on our hearts,
Loving a lone heart more than gilded altar:
"O not with searching telescope canst thou
Our glory reach, not in round numbers tell
The mystery of our nature: If thou wouldst
Receive the Godsent message of the stars,
Then hang upon us with a poet's eye
That loves us for our beauty, and seeks not
Too curiously our meaning, yet imbibes
The unseen essence that enriches him,
And makes him the most wise astronomer:—
  And who on autumn night ne'er felt the moon
Creep through him like a maiden's soul that is
With love's fine fire a-glow? Old Night's fair child,
That in chaste maidenhood must aye remain—
Rich in a dower of renewing youth:
Wherefore her office is to woo young hearts
And lead them gently to a higher love.
O I have seen—about the harvest time—
When most young hearts into their moon-age pass—
I have, myself, seen then, upon the air,
Rushing between our own earth and the moon,
Thousands of bright and starry threads of fire;—
They were not star-lights shooting *to* the earth,
But emanated from love-kindled souls
Upon the earth, and centred in the moon.
I've seen a Poet on the dreamy shore—
The ocean in deep slumber at his feet,
With scarce the motion of a sleeper's breast,
The full moon lapping all in milky light,
He, like a statue, staring into her—
Become, methought, so lustrous in himself,
That, even in that shiney night, he glow'd
Like palest marble on a ground of black:

And thus he stood drawing down light from heaven,
Until the moon went out and earth was dark;
Yet he was not; and then it was I saw
The light he drew was not the moon's alone,
But that which flows inside of hers—unseen
Till garner'd in the cumulating soul.

But not the waters and the stars alone!
All things, in sea and air and on the earth,
Are half invisible to outward sight,
Walling the Eden of our destiny.
But yet they tell, in mutterings and shadows,
The mysteries beyond; and he that once
Has caught the unknown tongues, been startled with
The shadows, like a wing swept o'er his soul,
Is ever after glorified, has found
The opening and the everlasting way. —

We may not enter wholly but by death,
Which is our passport. For the present 'tis
Enough for us to listen from without,
And read the words and signs that on us break—
Deep in the forest fanes, 'mid Druid oaks,
Where silence is so silent that it may
Be strangely heard in many whisper'd voices
That speak together from behind the trees.
Away among the glens, where, like a god,
The eagle sits upon his thronëd peak,
Gleaming like gold far up amid blue air,
And drawing out the earth-stains of our hearts,
To the dispersion of his airy cliffs:—
On mountain ridges where the young winds come
Out of the vales to play. We listening hear
Them rustling up the heath, but mark them not
Until they burst in kisses on our cheek:
Then rush they on in laughter like wild maids,
While all the mountain gullies laugh in turn,
And spread their arms like lovers to receive

The dimpled beauties falling out of breath:—
By mountain tarn whereto the weary sun
Has clomb the hills to drink, and where the stars
Come stealthily at night to bathe, like nymphs
That shame to strip until the sun has gone:—
By ruin'd castles, where the warrior's eye
Gleams down dark centuries upon our souls
And wakes them to the clang of wilder'd days;
Or where the gray walls start into old mirth
At thought of all the ancient revelrie
That brimm'd them o'er. Lay thou a deep ear there,
And thou wilt hear the music as of yore,
Bursting the hall-doors open like a tide
That breaks in waves upon the night's black shore.
And if thou'lt wait until the morning star
Slips from her chamber like a trembling girl
Sway'd in the hope and fear of her bridal morn,
Wishing yet dreading the coming of that lord
That is to make her being all his own,
As doth the sun that star—if thou wilt wait
Until that queenly and adorëd star,
Like one great pearl on the brow of Dawn,
Bedew the east with luscious dropping light—
And lay thine ear close to the castle wall—
Thou'lt hear strange things! At that bewailing hour,
When earth awakens in the arms of night
And finds herself polluted, maids of old,
Troubled with love's unrest, rose from their dreams,
And to that lattice-gazing star sighed out
The burden of their hearts: from donjon cell
The lips that scorn'd to mourn, unconsciously
Told out their sorrows in deep stifled moans
As that heart-seeking star crept on their gloom:
And from that wilder'd time those sighs and moans
Have hung about the crumbling walls:—maybe
The souls that bore them come at fitting times
To live old woes transform'd to eternal joys;
For heavenly spirits love to haunt those places

That in their earth-life drank deep of their thought.
The noted places of the earth are hung
With cobwebs of the gone, in spirit weav'd.
Linger about them in humility,
And leave thyself to the upturning mood,
And thou'lt be swathed in the eternities
Whose outward shreds have pass'd:—
In temples when
The organ rolls its breath in volumes round
The pillar'd galleries, and woman's voice
Out of the tumult like a rocket shoots,
And into the big music comes again
In bells of falling melody. Their creeds?
The under current of them all is thine,
And earnest hearts can hear the stream's deep tone
Beneath the surface clamour of the foam:—
In crowded streets where we may best throw off
Our self-oppression and be most alone,
And give a passive brain to the rush of mind
That like a river courses to the sea
Of outspread thought, horizon'd by the mist
That hides the infinite from the finite eye:—
In summer when the sultry day lies down
At noon to rest, lull'd by the hymn of bees,
And all things tarry for a drowsy hour
Till she arise to go along with them.
In that noon hour when all things are at stand,
Thou mayest pass beyond them and behold
Glimpses of that they tell us of but hide:—
In winter when the snow coats hill and plain,
And all green things have crept in from the cold,
And farm noises beat across the fields,
And the cracking ice chinks in the stony delf,
And the hard blue air is full of tinkling sounds,
And under all the faint and far-off hum
Of coming Spring, moving within the earth;
When in blank trees the spirit is not dead
But works an unseen change—look in and know:-

In children's eyes, ere yet the I, the ME,
Has swum within them, and whilst yet we may,
Unwearied, gaze into their azure wells
And see no mote of earth, but all the soft
Infinitude of heaven that engulfs
The gazer's soul in depths of skiey light:—
In books that so bewilder and disturb
The brain with multiplicity. Shut out
Their number for the time: one master book
Disposes to the influx of All Thought,
Doing the thing that numbers can but do.
The thought lives not on pages but in space;
The printed characters mysteriously
Open the mind's pores and the thought flows in.
And may not books—our idolizëd books—
Be but the anvil sparks of beaten soul—
The left materials of wondrous work,
That please a child more than the work itself?
The maker of the book has the great good,
The reader only gleans a gather'd field.
All work yields up its wealth to him that works;
It will not be transferr'd, and therefore books
Are but our stepping-stones into the mines.

I see no heaven beaming in that eye!
O if thou still art lost and blindly grope,
Thy vision dark amidst excess of light,
Go to the desert where God's awful rest
Is on the fetter'd air, and nothing but
Blank rocks can bide the unutterable pause;
Go with a mind as naked as the rocks,
All memories stript off, all shreds of creeds—
A very child, unswaddled as from God,
But with thy garner'd consciousness of Thought,—
And that which thou hast ever fail'd to find,
Will, as the light finds out the dark, find thee,
And gather as a dawn into a day,
And be thy Light—be Thee—as light is day.

III.

I sadden when amid the stars I look—
And think the earth is only one of them.
Fancy may soar until it loses breath,
Yet be no nearer to the end it seeks.
Away into the painful deeps of space
The oppressëd thought may, endless, endless, wing,
But still unnumber'd worlds lie all around,
Swimming in melting light, whilst this globed earth
Is but a little winking point of light,
Unmark'd, unknown from millions of the same.

And so I cannot look amid the stars,
And link the earth as one upon my vision,
But straight a blighting sadness on me falls:
I lose all faith in man's high destiny,
More than may well belong to a race of ants;
And nothing can I see for him in time,
But eat and sleep that he may live and work,
Then die that he may make room for another.
O, there is nothing else! What *could* there be
For him who is but an atom of a whole—
A grain work'd in amongst the myriads
That make the solid rock?

But whilst I heave
My sadness on the night, the stars, like eyes—
Most earnest, pitying eyes—beweep the lie
That festers in my brain. Ye lustred stars!
We revel nightly in your nectar'd light
Until we reel in joy like drunken gods:
Ye flood us into trances with your beauty,
Yet are ye *conscious* of the power ye own?
Constant and true ye are; but do ye crave
For ever, as do we, *more* of God's truth?
Have ye a sense of duty? Know ye aught

Of *right* and *wrong?* Dream ye of buried time,
Or brood like prophets on the unborn years?
Ah, no! Ye roll out innocent as tears
Upon the cheek of night, and have no sense
Of that emotion out of which ye came—
No feeling of the light that in you gleams.
Ye have no heart-eye blear'd with the regret
Of wasted years, wild wandering in the Now,
Or radient with the orient dawn of hope.
There is in you no show of comprehension:
Brighter than eyes ye are, yet want perception.

Then why should we who have all these be sad,
And fell ourselves eclipsëd by the stars?
Earth, thou'rt a star, yet art beneath our feet:
Man is thy lord, and thou his vassal nurse:
And all the proud orbs of the arching sky
Bow down to his high thought.—I am not sad,
Nor feel I now the glory of the stars
Oppress and dwarf me into littleness:
Believing this that sees and comprehends
Is greater than that seen and comprehended.

Believing? Thou must *know* and *feel* that truth:
Believing only and repeating thus
The thoughts that are as old as poet's song,
Will never make thee greater than the stars;
And thou art dead as they unless that truth
Be in thy soul as blood is in thy frame.

IV.

The ways are closed upon me. When I try
To get admittance to the busy mart,
No one hears what I say, and straight a wall
Runs up about me; buyers and sellers pass,

And no one asks me—Will I buy or sell.
And when the day grows dusk, and cheery groups
Wear off, well pleased, a good day's business done,
None asks me—Will I go. I have no key
To fit the lock of any of their hearts.—
Our meetings too at nights disgorge me up
The same unalter'd thing. That gastric juice
That mellows all their natures into chyme,
Slimes me but works no chemical effect.
Duck-like they breast the world's tide and float on
Sleek and unruffled. If *I* tempt the stream,
I fall into some eddy and am drawn
By hidden currents back against the feathers.

The meanest thing should have a way on earth.
Have *I* not mine? Ah! when that midday sun
Shall, like an after-dinner alderman,
Full faced and flushed with wine, wink in yon west,
And eve's one star comes through the gauzy light
To tend like a loving wife her winey lord—
Who like ripe fruit drops heavily to bed—
And kneeling on the earth she gives her soul
To heaven in a flood of glowing prayer,
And quietly beside her lord lies down,—
O then my hour is come!—I move as light
That has its time and orbit. With the stars
My way is through the night. Our light is pale
And dim and distant to the earth; but earth
Knows not the glow we have amongst ourselves.
The fogs that hide us are not ours but hers.

God lights both stars and souls; their glory is
Their measure of His being. Who would shine
In his full light must tarry like the stars
And bide God's time—not in hibernal coil,
But with a watchful soul laid bare to Heaven,
And in a ceaseless prayer, drinking in
The light that moves him onward to his rise.

No one, however dim, is wholly dark;
For life and darkness cannot be in one.
But whoso, charmed with another's blaze,
Would also be of that peculiar hue,
Draws in a borrow'd life that dwarfs his own.
He is the garner of another's wealth,
To be repaid with interest, beggaring him.

Thou see'st that heaven of stars!—not man, the race,
The multitudinous, crowded, scatter'd race,
Seems more confused, more purposeless than that.
Yet each particular orb has its own course,
And threads the ambiguities of space
Unerringly, because moved by the Law
That shaped its course and it, and is to it
Necessity of movement. Fretful soul—
Fretful because of freedom—thou shalt know
That under thy free gift lies that same Law:
It is thy root of being, grows in thee,
And will press out that freedom, which is but
Thy present mode of growth and source of ill.
The time will be when we shall pace the heavens
In glorious constellations like the stars;
Blissful as they, but conscious of our bliss;
Moved only by necessity of Right,
Which is the highest reach of a free soul.
The time *will* be hereafter—*might* be now,
Did we obey the tide of that deep Will
Beneath the turbid currents of our own,
And take with joy the motion that it gives.

My disobedience drives me to the night:
My way should not be with the stars alone:
The same deep spirit that bears up the dark
Brings in the living day, and bides all day
Amongst the ways of men. If I have not
Found what I sought in them, have been like one
Breathing an element that gives no life,

It was for want of truer seeking: THOU,
The life of *all* the elements, wast there—
The life that in defeat gives victory,
And gain in loss.—I will not shun the field
Of the world's battle: if I may not ride
Proudly with shining helm and nodding plume,
On the topmost surge of deeds, I will unmark'd
Pass through it like a spirit, as THOU dost;
Be with the stout hearts in the cloud of war,
And help them to THY bosom when they fall.

V.

When we two were dear friends I sway'd between
God and the World. It with its ceaseless round
Of precept and example pull'd me on,
And daily grew in force. The Spirit Soul
That lies unseen and trodden in the dust,
Came only when the World would throw me off—
In solitude and sorrow came and whisper'd—
'The World hath thrown thee off but thou hast fallen
On that which doth the giddy World bear up.
The surge hath cast thee down, but thou hast found
The deep sea's rest. The surge itself but frets
To find a rest like thine: it looks above
In envy of the heaven's quiet blue
And scrambles to get up;—ah, witless surge!
That ceaseless climbing lengthens thy unrest;
Thou must at last return into the deep
Still bosom of thy being; peace is there—
The unfathom'd peace that can alone be thine.
Yon blue serenity does not exist
Save in the eye's delusion: when the hand
Draws near to take the bliss, it is not there.'

Thus would the Spirit voice, but again the din
Of rolling day would deafen me, and my heart
Would follow in the pageantry of day;
Deeming the voice that spake had been my own,
Hanging sour grapes in the World, heaping down
On the hard relentless ground to break my fall,
And turning failure to commodity—
The last shift of weak hearts. And so the World
Would have me all again: its pageantry
Became the only real—all else dream:
What eyes and hands can grasp take thou and live;
Nothing there is behind this show but death.

Once friend, it's well we are no longer friends,
But hate each other—O how much we hate!
As much as e'er we loved in olden time,
When all the ground-work of our natures lay
In keeping like the bases of two cones
Together laid and meeting in all points.
The figures are reversed; the broad affections
That friendship builds upon, lie in us both
All on the offturned sides that cannot touch;
And we that in our fitness were as one,
Now meet but in one point—and that is *hate*.

Yet say I it is well; else thy gilt course,
With the authority of added years,
Had drawn my wavering, undecided, step,
And given me smooth progression in thy wake.
I had been still sway'd in my old unrest,
Or all bought over to a faithless peace.
But came the sudden, unprepared-for throe
That heaved us from each other. Had the chain
That bound us in our love withstood that wrench,
Then more than ever had we been one heart.
I will not say with whom the weakness was—
Although I have my thought—but snapt a link

That never can be welded: Our next love
Must forge itself a chain to bind us with.

It was the whole upheaving of our natures;
And gather'd years were scatter'd to the blast.
We rock'd in peace upon one tide; a wave
That raked the ocean deeps rose up between,
And in two currents broke. One took in-shore
Into the crisping bay where streamers flaunt
From idly cabled ships, and summer friends
Come wooing the mild air; and with it thou
Went proudly on, hail'd by the summer friends.
The other took me like a prey and drove
In triumph out to sea. A lesser force
Could not have cross'd the bar, had left me there
To wreck amongst the breakers; but this met
And bore them down. In the meeting crash methought
The face of heaven was blurr'd, and I engulf'd
As in a horrid dream: but soon I woke,
Not *from* but as it seem'd *within* a dream—
Not to old life but into a new birth.
It was the passing into that deep sea
That is the under-being of all things—
The deep calm it, and they the curling waves
That ever and anon are lost in it.
The things I held to as stabilities,
Now thaw'd away; and that faint ghost-like thing
That came of old and comforted my woes,
Was a still inlet of the unfathom'd deep
That now lay more reveal'd: it was no ghost
Of a night-shrouded brain, which morning's sun
Would scorch into its grave, but the up-reach
Of that deep Life, whereof the universe
Itself is but the ghost.

There is no heart
That is not penetrated with that Life:
Our Heaven is as the fulness of our share;
And he of scrimpëd measure cannot see

The bliss of him whose full cup overflows.
That which he has he takes and never doubts,
But calls him mystic who has more than that,
Him purblind who has less. There comes to all
A deep sense of the *true*—itself its proof:
Doubt has no wedge-room when the inflow comes:
It carries its own warrant like plain sight,
And he that sees believes. Therefore I rest
In this blue deep, nor cast one wistful look
Back to the shallows of a doubtful shore.—
Day after day waves up the beach of time,
With ceaseless chafe and melancholy note
To him that is time's slave: but to the ear
That lays its hearing in the eternal sea,
Comes not the fretted murmur of the days.

We may not search our nearest brother's heart,
Or sound the secret fathoms of his soul;
And thou dear enemy art not reveal'd
In all thy depth to me. But certain winds
Have blown thy heart's throbs hither, and I know
Thou art not yet at peace: the World still spurs
Thy bleeding sides; thou may'st not shake it off;
For if it probes thy flank, it pats thy neck—
A coaxing cruel rider that will take
His hire out of the poor hack's blood and bones.

We are reversed in everything but hate;
But *thy* hate comes from the right side for me,
And if I curse thee, it is with deep thanks.
That bar of hatred that between us lies,
I've beaten on the anvil of my heart
Till now methinks it turns to love—red hot.
We'll grow to love each other for the heart
We put into our hate. Friendship suspects:
In open enmity what chance of guile?
We know each other true in our dislike,

And have no dread of falseness. When we meet—
As meet we shall upon another stage,
Where each shall bare to view the alphabet
Of his most inward life—and when we read
How step by step throughout this little war
Was taken and mistaken—tracing back
The thing to its first germ—ah then the first
Of all our quarrel will be as the seed
From which the fruit tree came—that seed not found.
And when we note how true we both have been
To our own sense of right, what then but love
And admiration for that thoroughness?—
In this faith let us live—love even now:
How else than thus can enemies be loved?

VI.

I wonder when I'll die and what will be
The circumstances that surround my death,
The immediate cause and nature of my end.
Whether some fierce disease on a sleepless bed,
Watch'd by sad earnest eyes in which I'll read
My untimely epitaph before I go:—
Or slow consuming fire that day by day
Smoulders within and makes no show of blight,
But wears the cheek of bloom, till, suddenly,
My unconscious path ends at a churchyard gate,—
I turn—too late! Death hems me in and points
Into his rank green fold, where I may count
The steps that lie between me and my grave.—
Or shall some sudden accident cut short
My flooding tide of life, and I that left
A joyous home, waved on by blessing hearts,
All jocund as the morn, be carried back
A mangled, mindless corse? that home's dear mirth
Gulp'd up in one wild spasm of despair,

My little lambkins pressing round their dam
In wondering affright, the meal prepar'd
With tentful care, breathing of my return,
Left but to feed their anguish!—I am there,
But at no board sit down: sweet lives that clomb
About me, clustering like wreaths of flowers,
Crush'd by the stricken pillar they adorned.—
Or shall I ripen on to gray old age,
Losing by slow and unperceived degrees
My hold of love and life, enjoying both
Up to the last with all my room of heart,
Until it close and I drop to my rest,
When home and hearts so flooded with me now,
Are either gone or fill'd with richer love,
And earth and I can spare alike each other?

Along the vista of a natural life
I gaze amidst dim shadows to its close,
And wonder if I'll travel to that close,
Or fall half journeyed in the chasmed way.
How darkley do we grope—thick dark ahead
That swallows up the glimmer from behind!
Each step is through a curtain of dense cloud.
Though light be on our feet, this present step
May edge the very brink of Death's dark pit.
We dare more than we know, and hearts would fail
If eyes could see the footing that we have.

How dear to each his little span of life!
Beggars and kings set on it the same price.
It stamps the gold of each: that life let out,
What then are regal crowns and raked-up pence?
Yet for some petty gain we risk that life
Which gives the worth we gain; or stake it on
Some sharp pin-point of honour—worth a pin.—
O full of contradiction! dear yet cheap!
At rustle of a leaf we start with fright,
And that dear life knocks wildly in our breasts,

As if it fear'd the falling of its house
And wanted out—and yet 'twas but a leaf.
A trifling insult jostles our conceit,
And life becomes a button to toss up
To see who'll lose or have it.

Is there aught
In this quick fear and sudden rush to save?
Is it a secret monitor that prompts
To cling to life because it is so short—
A tacit protest 'gainst the *immortal* life?
Or is there deeper truth in the mood that sets
Life cheaply on a straw—an inwrought sense,
Deeper than all our guesses, that comes up
And moves us to the ready risk of life,
Knowing, despite our fears, that loss of breath
Is not in very deed lost life but *change*,
As sunset is no loss to the sunken sun,
Who even now reigns in as true a day
As when he filled the azure of our noon.

Which is the deeper truth—the one that moves
To fear and trembling in this hour of breath,
Lest it should briefly end? Or that which prompts
To lavishment and heedlessness of life,
As if our portion were the exhaustless air?
And in what moods of being does each rise?

O ever in our lowest grades of sense,
Or when we use false shifts to bring about
Ends otherwise all good, or when our hearts
Are in the heaping up of cumbrous wealth,
We tremble for our safety and fear Death,
Lest it should come between us and our heaps,
Let fall the cloak that blinded our false shifts,
Or take us from the luxury of sense.—
But in our highest walks where Duty leads,
Not falteringly in doubt, but to the Right

Pressing still onward,—then is life itself
Sunk in the Right, and asks no separate care.
If Right be gulf'd in Death, Duty leaps in,
With eye full on the Right, but blind to Death.
The soul's integrity we buy with life,
And hold ourselves the gainers:—Yet if life
We had not after that, where were the gain?

Since, then, the mood we deem the most divine
Gives suff'rance to the lightlying of life—
Which is this self, and gives the all we have,—
I hold the deeper truth is stirring here—
The truth that *Death* is but a form of speech,
And is no more the loss of life to the Dead
Than *sunset* loss of light to the sunken sun,
Who march'd as freely down this cloudless eve
As when he clomb the morn all pearl'd with dew.

O be our life unclouded, and our setting
Will not be streak'd with fears; nor will our path
On to that setting be a maze of doubt.
The sun draws up the vapours that obscure him;
And doubts and fears are vapours of the brain:
The soul beyond sees clearly and is calm:
And so are all deep truths which are its rays
That pierce the blinding mist. To a pure soul
No one may guess what clear insights would come.
Seek we the wholly pure in the present hour,
And as 'twill leave no dark past to bedim
The ever starting memory with remorse,
So will it raise no further banks of cloud
To threat our journey with a weeping day:
And, living out the fulness of the Now,
The heart will have no room for a dreaded WHEN.

VII.

Was ever greater truant? I who know
That my salvation lies in thee alone!
Who never gave an hour of my heart
All over to thee, but the angels came
And bathed my blind lids with their dews of Heaven,
Till I, of poorest utterance, even I
Could see the fine light wherein poets dream.
Yet have I left thee Poesie as if
Thou and not I were the uplifted one.

O blame the weight of the restraining earth
And not the heart that would for thee aye beat,
Nor yet the head that sees how truly thou
Must be the Godsent mistress of my love.—
I never slight thee but my life becomes
A sunless plot that lies to the bleak north,
And ever seems to be in the year's back end:
A dismal, dreary place, of stunted growth,
And only by the lapwing's desolate cry
Startled at times into a lone wierd life.
If thou art long away my heart runs waste,
Rank weeds o'errun the garden of my brain,
And choke the flowers which thou hast planted there.
But give thee hearty welcome,—like a sun
Thou swimm'st into my being, and my heart
Is jubilant as May, and, like a sky
Of unseen larks, life rings, I know not whence.

If through my being I could shape thy course
Like a bold river with steep cliffy banks,
My life would be the rich and joyous vale
Through which it runs.—But I am undefined,
And can but give thee flat and sedgy banks.
Full forced and lavish as thy bounteous source,
Thou leapest from God's hills into my heart,

But suddenly art lost within a marsh,
And thy clear voice grows husky in the reeds.
It is a sluggish and a fruitless land!

O is there no rich soil beneath this mire?
I'll drain the fens, or sink with all my work!—
My thirsty nature gulps the living stream,
And gives none out: it stagnates, and is seen
Only in mirey pools. But through my life
I'll bank a river's bed: the fenny lands
Shall pay dear tribute in a thousand rills,
And give an earthy warmth to the flow
That comes from Heaven's hills; which else were clear
But chilly as the light of winter stars:
Chilly to human hearts, but to the gods
The life-blood of their veins.

O pure and cold
The things we cannot reach! Duty is cold;
Stern Virtue; God Himself!—We *bask* in Sloth,
As on a grassy slope at summer noon;
Vice draws us to it like an evening fire;
And Godlessness is like a tropic air,
It slackens thought and gives an unnerved bliss.
A sensuousness clings to us like a shell:
From Duty, Virtue, God, we shrink like snails
Into this Frailty, and deem all safe.
Weak fools! but wiser Fate! a passing foot
May crush us out on Duty, Virtue, God.

To him that shrinks from frost the frost is cold.
Let him go forth and meet it, and it warms
More kindly than red brands. The way to life
Is towards forbidding things: growth in approach;
In nearness, love; and reach'd, the soul's great life.

God gives out His divinity in rays
That reach the earth; and Poesie is one.

Souls faithful to the lode grow up to God,
Each missioned by the genius of his ray.
But faithless truants meet as faithless guides
That lead into the sloughs: a wandering lamp
Hangs out before; the furies dog behind;
And thus they grope about the mirey night.
And when each morn God's sun wakes up the day,
He finds them ever groping where they were.—
Nor shuns he them like sanctimonious saint,
But with his bright and all-embracing eye
Seeks to reclaim them.

Brothers of the dark,
Our sun breaks every day: we heed him not—
The insulted, slighted, most forgiving sun!
A revell'd night are our lost yesterdays,
All huddled into one, each day shut out.
Forget them as one night—what loss in that?
Eternity is round it. Be next dawn
Our first income of light (the dead cast off),
And we as new child souls. God never breathes
But through the infinitude each faithful soul
Receives its special want. O, brothers, watch!
We've singed our wings like moths in a false light,
And cannot with the larks meet dawn in the clouds:
But see! the sky is ruffling in the east
Like a calm sea before a landing ship,
And we are on the shore with leaping hearts
To meet long parted friends. Soon will the sun
Lie high and dry upon the eastern strand
And earth be stirring as a disembarkment.
We'll lose each other then. Each waiting heart,
Fill'd with its own lost ray, base loves shall pale,
Like tapers of the night when day's let in,
And truer vision come with truer light.

Henceforth I live and die with my heart's love.
We rise or fall together. If I fail

To woo her as the world deems worthily,
Still have I peace of mind in having given
My poor best up to my most worthy love.
Failure in this were peace and joy at last.
Successes fanning from all other points
Were misery, so this were left unstrived.

I give her all my being in the faith
That he who gives his all of love and will
Can never fail but—though the outer works
Of his dear acts become no worshipp'd fane,
Be all unworthy of a world's regard
And fail to it—still bears within himself
The true wage of success—the *having done.*
And he has built *his* temple to the gods.

Lead where thou wilt, I'll follow. Deeper trust
Is with me now than when, in the young time,
Thou led'st me into sunny showers of thought,
Wherein my utterance was like that of dreams—
All clear and full when *in* the dream; but, waked,
Dim, poor and meaningless; until again
Thy show'ry light came, and the same weak words
Were big with their lost meaning.—In the night
The earth's green loses meaning, and her flowers
Are all one eyless black: but when she walks
In beamy day, the meadows and the flowers
Get back their lost expression. Who shall say
The night and not the day brings out the true?

Thou art my sunlight. I have learn'd to know
The highest as the truest; to trust more
Light that discovers even a changeful sense
Than Dark that may confound it, but gives none.—
O if thou art indeed a ray from God,
And if in thee I have my highest reach,
My deepest ecstasy, my best of life,—
What then but give a dedicated heart?

What then! but that the *universal* love
Beats like a heart in nature, pulsing out
Its deep flood to extremities of soul,
And moves us, all unconscious and despite
Our partial likings, to the good in all.

But Poesie, thou art God's broadest beam—
The secret life, the charm of all our loves.
If I may not go heart and hand with thee,
Come thou and go with me. If I must cling
To things that in my soul I do not love—
Things that yet share the universal good—
Be with me, be the light to show the good.

VIII.

I could not think what gave her that fine beauty,
Until I saw her dead: for in her face
There was no line a sculptor would have prized.
And yet methought all Heaven was in that face!
I could not look into it and retain
A single hold of earth: and when I gazed
Within her eyes they drank out all my soul,
And left me as a statue with the gleam
Of adoration in its stony front.

But when I saw her dead upon her bier
I turned with loathing, and I could have rush'd
Down from this upper earth into my grave
To be where she was not. Ill-favor'd thing!
O what a dream I've had that she was fair!
Either it was a dream or that stretch'd form
Held nothing of the beauty I adored.—
That form was all one settled ashy hue;
No colour came and went, no wreathing thought

Moved o'er its pale pinch'd lips. I stole one look
Into its staring eyes;—they knew not me,
Nor spoke one thought—those eyes that had so oft
Enfolded all my soul within their lids.
I touch'd its cold cheek—God! my blood shrank back
And stopp'd its pulses like a frozen brook.
There was no trace of that fine something there
That flow'd in all the motions of her being.

If that still form was *hers*, it was not *her*.
For through her frame there ran a wondrous speech
E'en when she spoke no word. External things
Leapt eagerly into her centring breast,
And came again all dripping with the dew
Of her new thought. And when she spoke it seem'd
The utterance of a company of minds,
That even in condemnation gives support
To that which is condemn'd. Most erring souls
When they approach'd her could not hold their sins,
But, child-like, blabb'd them out, and came away
Ennobled and amazed to find what good
Sprang up when she took off their loads of sin.

Yet had she no great gift that one could see.
I thought it was her beauty that I loved,
And sat whole hours pondering it. I saw
Two silver fountains welling in her eyes—
A constant flowing up of crystal thought
That kept them ever clear though trouble stirr'd.
A dreamy summer day was in her hair;
And fancies chased each other o'er her face
Like skiey shadows on a field of grain.
And when I touch'd her hand, O then methought
I stood before the east at early dawn
And saw the crowding beauty of the morn—
Young day still in its cradle of the sea
Rocking and dreaming—streaks of fringy light
That moved like curtains—and the lonely star

Like a young mother watching the baby day,
With half her love on it, half on her lord
Coming from his far voyage in the east.
A poem fill'd her veins, and when she moved,
Listen'd, or read, or lifted up her eyes,
It lived along the surface of her being,
In wavy lines of beauty.

But she died—
Ay, even in the midst of all this beauty!
Whate'er it was that went—life, spirit, soul—
It took all with it, left not one fair shred.
The lines that hemm'd her living, hemm'd her dead,
And still I looked for beauty, but could find
Only lost beauty's secret in dead lines.

IX.

If thou should'st die my little one!—This dread
Comes ever with the look thou gav'st me now.
It flashes through my thoughts, and then my heart
Shakes with the muffled thunder, and big drops
Fall from the cloud, my brain.—If thou should'st die,
How blank to me were life! The round of life
Must ever have a centring point of love,
And thou art mine. Thou lost, I were unsphered.

I cannot form in thought thy loss, or see
How that which leaps and speaks through thy sweet frame
Should ever leave it; yet must feel it may;
Must feel that restless little bell, thy voice,
That keeps a jubilee within my heart;
Those little pattering feet that all the day

Like kittens gambol up and down the house;
And those pure eyes that open through to God,
Revealing to my gaze deep views of Heaven;
All, all that makes my little darling up,
May change and lie before me still as sleep!
But not with sleep's red roses on thy cheeks,
Budding all night, blooming at break of day;
Nor with the living dream within thy veins
That charms off the iconoclast, decay;
But like a pretty wreath of virgin snow
That melts the while we look and by next morn
Is not to mortal eye.

My little one,
I harp upon this thought, and almost dream
Thou art already dead, and wear my heart
With the imagined grief. But, O deep joy!
I waken from my thought, and thou art here,
Sparkling beside me. O live on and be
The little fountain where I come at eve,
After the sweating day, to cool my brain.

Oft in the heat of strife will come the thirst
Of love upon me, and my parch'd heart sinks
Amidst distasteful work. A sudden thought
Of thee, my little one, leaps in my breast,
And soon my heart is at its post again,
Slaked with this gush of love, and work is joy;
And sweet anticipations ebb and flow
Like waves within a bay, each higher up,
Until the full tide of my joy is reach'd
In clasping thee unto my flooded heart.

The homliest soul will sicken of its home,
Seeing a wingëd cloud in the blue vault;
Or hearing through the city's maddening din
The abandon'd carol of a cagëd lark;

Or seeing primroses brought into town;
Or reading of dreamy isles in the sunny south,
Of marble palaces, Italian skies.
But when I wander and new scenes fill up
The circle of my thought, amidst them all
Comes ever and anon across my brain,
A sweep as if 'twere from some soft dove-wing;—
I pause—sweet heart! it is the thought of thee.
And then I feel, if not a present bliss,
Thou art to me the deep reservëd *hope*,
Which is the secret life of present bliss.

Come near, my Beautiful, and let me gaze
My soul all out into those beaming eyes,
Until I lose my being all in thee.
For is not love a losing of one's self
In that which is beloved? Love feels no self:
For though it spring in self, yet, like a flower,
It lives not for the soil, but yields up all
Its breathing essence to the wooëd air.

It is not only grief that likes to weep
Itself out in lone tears. Sweet, I must hide
These coming drops of love, lest, wondering, thou
Should'st ask, amidst thy prattle, what they mean.
Thou could'st not know they were for love, all love,
That are to thee tell-tales of hurt alone.

There, go and play, my Jewel,—I would read.
Alas! my book has gone out like a fire
In which a sunbeam strikes. I see no red
Thought burning in it. Newer light from God
Has fallen on my eyes and on my book,
And dazzled them to blindness. I have look'd
Into this lovely beam until my eyes
Are kindled and can see nought but the light
That flames in it and them.

If it should set!
Alas, if thou should'st die! And yet, sometimes
I think 'twere well for me thou didst die now,
And to the heaven of my memory
Pass with the morning dew upon thy head,
And be to me a fresh green thought for aye.
For I may lose thee quite if thou abide
To suffer living change. The hours drink out
The beauty of the morn: what charm'd us then,
We cannot find in all the after day.

I have lost many pets by living death,
And so might thee. The young of anything
Finds the most honey'd corner in my heart:
But if it stay until the streaks of dawn
Have parted from it one by one, ah then
My heart has lost its tenant, though it lives:
It has not even the ghost of that lost love
To haunt its desolate chambers, since the thing
Is still embodied and denies the ghost.
But drag it from my heart before its time,
E'en in affection's increase, with the glow
Of rising light upon it, and methinks
The heart could cease not to be haunted by
The sweet idea of the loved thing lost.

Sometimes this strange throe moves me: thou at hand,
And some suggestive weapon in my grasp,
I feel a pushing on to lift my arm
And slay thy life! I dare not fight the thought
But drop the weapon like a coward and flee
From it and thee, chased by the hounding thought.—
If I could neither lay the thought nor flee,
But did the strange remorseful deed, O God!
What a terrific breaking up of soul

Would shake my frame! But then the drenching
love!—
Like a black cloud I'd burst, nor cease to weep
Till I had rain'd myself into the grave
Beside my murdered joy.—Dark sobbing cloud!
Wrapt up in thy own grief—all heaven around
Is blue as angel's eyes, and the glad earth
Sunny and green, save this one little spot
Made black by thee. But it too shall be green,
When thou hast water'd it with all thy tears.

My precious one, and could I wish thee dead—
Dead, that thou might'st escape the living death?
False wish!—O thou canst never die to me,
More than myself to myself: for I see much
Of that same self in thee: the lines that bank
Our beings in have by one stream been mark'd;
And when thou liftest up those archëd brows
The light of my own soul looks out to me.—
The years can not estrange thee: though they roll
Thy budding youth all out and take thy bloom,
My heart will glory in the mellow fruit.
O thou art link'd unto me, blood and soul:
Thy change must have its parallel in me.

It is a cruel thing that love may be
On one side only; that a heart all warm
Must cleave unto another dead and cold,
And be unsightly as a growing branch
Upon a rotten tree. Pray God, my Love,
That I, in life, may never die to thee;
For there the fear is most. Thou art too full
Of love's sweet essences for death to take;
And so I rest without the fear of loss.
But *I* am prone as ether to be lost
And disappear out of most loving hearts.

Let us maintain the integrity of love
By being true to ourselves. A leal whole heart
Is as abiding in love's firmament
As any star in heaven. Let us give
Clear vantage to the light that burns within,
And like the stars be clear unto ourselves.
They are not self polluted—see they shine
No dimlier for all the murky nights.
And this should be great joy—that we, each one,
Might be a world of beauty in ourselves,
Unstain'd by circumstance as stars by cloud:
For though they seem torn out of their high spheres,
Trampled beneath the plashy feet of storms,
Yet when the storm has fretted past, we see
They have been lying in unthought-of peace.

Give me thy little hand. How heavenly soft!
It has no feel of this world's hardening work,
And emblems thy young soul, which bears not yet
The hards of earth upon it.—Wherefore should
Our Innocents put off the charmëd life
Which manhood does but struggle to regain?
We cast off child-content, and then begin
A life-long struggle for a child's content.—
Soft as it is, in this small hand I read
Lines prophesying burdens and earth-strifes.—
The azure innocence drops from thine eye:
Thou reck'st not of my augur. But my past
Gives me thy future now—and would, my Love,
I might fore-bear the burden of thy griefs
And leave thee all the joys. Yet God forbid
That thou should'st be robb'd of thy jewel'd sorrows!—
I could not wish my past one grief the less,
But would my griefs had been more wisely borne
And yielded more soul treasure. I have found
My richest jewels in the hardest rock,
But spoil'd them oft in breaking it; lost more

Through leaving much unbroken. Like a bee
I've ever tried to avoid the stony road,
And sought the lanes to nestle among flowers.
But took not duty with me like the bee:
My task sat like a beggar in the dust,
Neglected, and a busy world pass'd on.

But, ah, sweet Ignorance, thou canst not take
The meaning from my lips: thy soft brows lift,
Thine eyes give out a recognizing glance,
Only at certain words, as *bee* and *flowers*,
Which fall like gleams of sunshine on thy brain,
Chased by immediate shade.—Yet is it known
The spirit has a deeper speech than words,
A hearing that receives unspoken thought.
Some presences are felt like a sweet air
Blowing upon our souls, some like hell's breath.
If either come amongst us we take on
The good or evil odour. Therefore thou
May'st thus take on the nature of my thought:
And inasmuch as these pangs of regret
Make strong my future self, so may they thee.
Doubt not the unspoken precept: it doth pass
From soul to soul as dawn upon the earth—
Not with forced light, but gently leads in day,
Which soon is all in all; and we can trace
No footmark of a struggle with the night.

But strength of me or precept thou need'st none:
They could but help to give that which thou hast—
Thy rich inheritance of child-content.—
I do but speak my overflow of love.
It does not wait my time: tide-like it comes.
It ebbs and flows between us, and each wave
Throws up its thousand pearls upon our hearts.—
The World doth hold us poor, and we ourselves
Oft join the World in *feeling* we are poor—

Poor! and with all this treasure in our hearts—
Wealth richlier possessed than gold could be!
To *have* is but to *love;* and he whose heart
Is fullest of the love of godliest things
Is still the richest man, whatelse he lack.—
This is the very alchymy of truth:
God keep it aye within us.—There now, Love,
Go play thyself, and leave me here alone,
To open up the coffers of my heart
And count how rich I am in loving thee.

X.

My heart has choked me through this live-long day—
This day of duties closed. Each act of mine
To-day has been a death-pang: I have died
A former life in each. Our daily work
That we have done for years, O sad to feel
That this time is the last, and that to-morrow
Strange hands will take it up!

I shut the books
Whose each particular folio my hand
Can find without the exercise of thought—
The books that hold no character but mine.—
Now have I kiss'd the inkstand and the desk,
And given up possession of the key.
I look my last on each particular thing,
And see it draped in garments which my soul
Unconsciously has weaved. I did not think
How ivy-like my love had grown on them,
Till now I come to tear myself away.

How will it be with them when I have left?
Ah, shall I take away their mantling green,

And leave them bare and cold till they are clothed
With other verdure by a richer mind?
Will those whose custom 'tis to come and go
Feel desolation when I am not here?
I know there will be many, round whose hearts
My being throws its arms, as their's round mine:
For we, without one word of plighted faith,
Have grown to know ourselves true brother men,
And wear our souls to each other in our eyes.
They will be haunted like an empty house;
My absence, like the passing of a ghost,
Will cross them when they see my accustom'd place.
Our wants, more than our havings, fill the mind,
And oft a thing's not ours till it is lost.

Farewell, old duties that I held as tasks,
Not over-willingly perform'd! Now ye
Ascend to Heaven and are angels' work—
The higher, that you were most truly done,
Despite the unwillingness. For I have learn'd
To know how good a thing is tasteless work
When faithfully perform'd. The man transmutes
The meanest office to a golden reign,
Or blasts an angel's work with smoke of hell.
Men grieve their hearts at being out of place,
Unknowing that each man must place himself,
Not vainly fleeing from the post he holds,
But drawing round his feet the charmëd ring
That makes all sacred ground on which he treads.

We have to learn God's uses of the world,
And put our own aside like worn-out clothes.
Most of our business waits yet to be done
To yield the noblest fortunes. It is big
With mines scarce broken on. We have been fool'd
With coin, bright coin that bears the current stamp,
But is not gold. We have not known the gold:

We have not known that in the ways of trade
The soul might be ennobled and enrich'd—
Yea, that this is God's very use of trade.—
Let us begin our business to this end—
This end so strangely missed; if gained, not prized.—
I go to make my fortune; and the world
Will count me poor, unfortunate. How rich
I may be even then, the Heavens will know.

Farewell, old duties! Wherefore do I leave
Your sweet content—content now that I leave?
Have I drunk all the sweets ye held for me,
And am—not knowing—even at the dregs;
So that my further draughts were bitterness?
Or, with accomplish'd difficulty, did
Your true life pass away, and leave me nought
To garner in my soul when that was gone—
Nought but the soft and soul-corroding ease?
I ask my weeping heart, Why does it leave?
It has no answer: like a drooping girl
It leans against my breast, and points to Fate.
O heart, I see so little of myself
In the beginning of my life's chief acts,
That I begin to think there is a hand,
Behind the scenes, that moves us to the stage,
Then leaves us there to play our parts.

And now
I stand behind the curtain that divides
Two acts in my life's drama. I can hear
The dense hum of the audience that will watch
Each movement of my acting. But I stand
Alone here with my throbbing heart and God:—
Alone; for he that would with God commune,
Will, even in the crowd, still be alone.—
This interval of pause is like a pool
That breaks the onflow of a brawling stream.

And, gazing deep into the abyss of life
I see the sands of time o'er which it runs,
With all the purposes of life reveal'd
Like pebbles at the bottom of the pool,
Which in the turbid current are not seen;
And under all the great clear eye of God
Like the blue sky reflected.—O my heart!
Would I might shape thy beating all for God,
That when again I come in the World's gaze,
His eye may be the only one I feel.

The doubts of coming time, the sad and sweet
Regrets of a sublimed and hallow'd past,
Divide my brooding mind as hence I go:
They crush the present out. But if God's light
Abided in my soul and never set,
My present were an all-sufficing Now.
For he that lives for ever in that light
Partakes of all its attributes—regrets
No good outlived, nor dreads the ill unborn,
But in the abundant present breathes full life.

O, there are blessed lives on which God show'rs
His spirit down like rain; more blessed ones
Through which he is a never failing stream;
And both are rich and bounteous as green meads.
With me the springs are buried deep in earth;
And would I drink the spirit, I must dig,
And oft be disappointed. For the most,
My life's an arid waste, panting with thirst,
Which nothing but the living stream may quench.

Farewell aunt England! I have been caressed
In thy kind lap of Lancashire so long,
That now I'll scarcely know the Doric voice
Of my old mother Scotland, and shall feel

That going home is going most *from* home.
Thou art my heart's home, England. When I look
Into the *camera* within my brain,
I see the moving picture of thy woods,
With all their sylvan glades; rich waste of fields
That give free crossing to th' exploring foot;
Thy warm green lanes, and hedges thickly laced
With bramble, honeysuckle, and sweet dog-rose;
Thy wandering streams that lead through bosky dells,
And meads of rarest green.—But most of all
The Ribble winds herself about my heart;
For, from her cradle in the hills of York
Down to her green grave in the Irish sea,
I know her every winding, and can tell
Where be her fords and bridges. That last bridge
That spans near where her meady lips grow salt
With immemorial courtship of the sea—
O, memory! the river of my heart
That bridge will span until it cease to flow;
And those black eyes that lighted me like lamps,
Night after night, across it—still will dash
Their light athwart the dark nights of my soul,
And strike a fitful glare when memory's cloud
Obscures my present and diviner light.—

Ah, was it vain to woo and not to win?
And, after dreaming years of love, to wake
And count my object better lost than won?

It was not vain: my object was not lost;
But rather gained by loss, since still for me
She is the gorgeous picture that love drew,
Undim'd by the possession. Those dream'd years
Stand rounded in my past, not broken up
By dire reality. I can go back
Into them as a temple, and bow down

Before the image love has glorified,
And drink the joy of worship.

Dost thou think
She was not worthy of a bended knee?
Love sanctifies a thing of little worth;
And he that worships the recipient
Of his most sacred passion, worships well.
The cup that holds the precious wine of love
Is even to be prized for that it holds.—
O, I have pour'd my love into her heart!
As in a fount, it well'd up in her eyes;
But all came back again to her own breast,
And but the beggar's portion came to me:
Yet am I richer for it to this day.

Our errors seem all purposeless as weeds;
But they are weeds from which the quiet soul
Distills a balm that medicines our lives.—
There is a wise assimilating power
Within the mortal frame that works and builds
Without decree of ours, and from the wide,
The universal bosom, draws the store
That makes the individual—not alone
From that we bring to it, as daily bread,
But air, light, heat, and things we know not of:
So in the mind there is a kindred power—
By us unwill'd as that which moves the heart—
And years that we think lost have been worked in
Most richly through our natures. Who can say
What serves our Being most? Oft, like the beasts,
'Twill turn away from dainty things we give,
And crop a thistle.—I have labour'd much
To bring unto my soul the richest food,
Laid up great store of books, have sought wise friends,
And hanker'd after churches. Yet when done,
I find me nibbling at life's poison'd weeds,

Or battening on barrenness; my books
Shelved and not open'd yet; wise friends, when found,
Deserted; and the church door never cross'd.—
Our nature is above us; we may think
We educate ourselves; but we forget
This higher nature educates the *we*.

Farewell again, sweet land—my second home!
Within thy beds of roses I have known
The thorn more than the rose, but could not see
How bee-like I have been in gathering
These loads of honey'd love that clog my flight.—
My heaven was dull and leaden till I near'd
The margin of my setting:—I am gone,
And scarcely can I think yon golden sky
Is that which I have left. Shine on my back;
For I have turn'd me to another day;
And though I look through mist into the dawn,
The day will brighten, and the larks will sing.

XI.

Through all my years of waken'd thought I've been
Haunted in spirit by a sullen grief;
Which sleeps, or is not heard, amid the move
Of work or strife; but, like the owl i' th' tow'r,
Hoots out within me in my twilight hours,
Or when some cloud brings on a fancied night
And makes unnatural pause to earth and soul.

And I have thought this brooding trouble came
Out of my life's misfortunes, or arose
From conscious errors—duties left undone,
Returning on me, crying to be done;
Or from my heart's poor weaknesses that leave

A festering spot in memory. And I
Have labour'd to outreason this and that—
To make my heart pure, and to pluck and prune
Weeds and unwholesome growths. I thought, as each
Seem'd to infect my life, if this one thing
Were wrung out of my blood, O I could breathe
Freely the air of peace, and nothing else
Could choke my joy again. And so it was,
That when with pain and struggle I could drag
My grief out to the light, and drive 't away,
My being open'd all its cells and drew
A deep long draught of joy, that seem'd to exhaust
The bluest clefts of heaven—one glad breath!—
But when I look'd into myself again,
Alas! my ghost was there in another shape.
I had but dragg'd to light an effect, the cause
Pass'd through my grasp, like air—a ghost indeed!

It haunts a house deserted—haply one
That has not yet been fill'd. There is I know
A Presence in whose life all phantoms die.

Thou say'st that God is ever everywhere:
But if he be not in my *consciousness*,
He's not in *me*.—There is a twofold life—
The life we *all* have, and the life with God,
Which few, or none on earth, partake in full.
Yet is a human soul the only thing
That can receive that God-life; and for this
It is immortal. Had we never known
The light of that existence, we had lived
Contented in our blindness and the dark.
I have but seen enough to know my want—
My only want; for that supplied supplies
All other wants of the soul, or makes them none.
And like a dungeon'd prisoner I've groped

About my years of night to find the dawn:
The faintest glimmer piercing in my cell
Has fill'd me with the liberty of day.

I have been very lonely! I have shunn'd
What we name *company* to be less lone,
And sought my comfort in the wilds. But not
Alltimes to find: for I have gone and come
Bewilder'd as a day of mist and cloud,
That sets in night without one beam of sun,
Or patch of blue, to tell that Heaven is.—
And I have shunn'd the duties of my day
As waste of soul, and envied nobler art—
Forgetting that the *artist* gives his work
The stamp of its nobility. The gods
Are with us in our sphere: accomplished *that*,
We cannot choose but step into a higher.
Though Cromwell was a king by right of brain,
He won his sceptre with a captain's sword.

The duties God assigns me I would leave
For those assign'd to others; therefore stand
Powerless between. Heaven's ends will not be moved
Save in accomplish'd act. I have not learn'd
To know God's features in my daily work,
Else were it all sufficient—it alone.
The food each labouring spirit needs the most
Is in its nearest duty—beauteous growth
Of the eternal being in the act.
For Right and Duty, Conscience and the Truth
Are God's own breath, by which weak men have been
Inspired with a divinity of strength.

Ye who in spirit are not yet awake,
Dream while your night remains; for, soon or late,
The morn breaks sleep, and then farewell, dream things—
The satisfaction of a plenteous board,

The joy of wine-cups, and the light exchange
Of surface friendships, rumours and vague thoughts;
Which vanish till again in after time,
With a diviner meaning they come back.
The one sole want dawns on the awaken'd soul—
The want for God in all, and all in God—
This utter vagueness to the soul that sleeps,
But O how truly all in all, *he* knows
Who once has seen the Eternal. Life's unrest
Is his thereafter, till he grows to God;
But that unrest the token of his growth.

Therefore I argue not against my grief,
Which being Heaven-sent, leads back to Heaven.

XII.

I marvel not that, in th' ignorant time,
Men gave each element its god, and crouch'd
In spirit as in frame, when through their woods
Fire like a demon ran; or when the wind
Beat on their sheltering bields, and with the rain
Grappled to death; or when the thunder spoke
In answer to the sign the lightning made,
Causing great discontent among the hills.—
This black and fiery warfare rushing through
The accustom'd quiet of their blue ceil'd earth—
What wonder they deem'd spirits were abroad!
Was not wild motion life? big noises speech?
To them they were; and deeplier to us
So *should* they be—*all* motion and *all* sound.
For soul is there, though too familiar thought,
Incrusted with the daily use of names,
Becomes dead thought and misses it. And things—

Not only the imperious elements,
But common work-world and domestic things—
Have all their own peculiar and quaint tongues,
By which unseen we know them. Is it soul
In them that speaks to soul in us? or what?
'A silly question,' sayest thou? But think!
The sound of things inanimate is speech—
Of sentient origin. Whatelse is sound?
Thou can'st not tell though thou exhaust all speech.
And *motion*, thou may'st call it *force*—dead force:
But whether 'tis the swoop of giant storms,
Or fairy dimple on a dreaming lake,
Still say I it is life. Else, how receive
In our life-veins the pulses from without
That make us one with nature? Day and night
For ever through us come in throbs of beauty—
Sunshine and shadow and the breezy grass;
The woods that nod in slumber, or awake
To throw their tresses loose upon the wind;
The raking clouds that drive athwart the moon;
The wandering sea that never finds a home;
The lake that never leaves one; and the rivers
That come from rural poverty, like youth,
To push their lives in cities and grow rich—
Yea very rich, but troubled, in their deeps:—
Why speak these to our life if they have none?—
That river's soul runs through me! I could be,
With little change, its worshipper, O God!
But that it flows from thee, and Thou hast all.

I *should* live in a world of active duty—
My wants demand it. But my heart repines,
And leaves me to a world of idle thought,
Or that of outer Nature—the mere change
Of day and night and season, sun and moon;
Or vagrant fancy, or the fool's desire
For other place than this which is his own.—

A patch of blue in heaven, a pacing cloud,
A sun-gleam, or the carol of a bird,
Makes beggars of my duties, and they plead
In vain—although with God's own voice they speak.

To-day there is a tumult in the air,
A roaring as of furies in the bay,
A rumbling as of heavy toothëd wheels
Up there within the chimney; window panes
Batter'd and dim with gusty blads of rain;
The very wind seems roll'd in sheets of rain,
The houses dash'd, the steeples drench'd, the streets
Pelted and plash'd, and filled with runnels brown.
But loud o'er all the tumult in the air,
The roaring as of furies in the bay.

There had been eerie whistlings over night,
And wailings on the house-tops, which ran through
Our weird unblessed dreams. Ere we awoke,
The storm had also come into our dreams;
So that my spirit out of sleep was borne
E'en on the storm's wing; and for very joy
In this rough day, it cannot light again
Among the working homes. Yea, I have come
To find it here upon this bellowing strand,
And sent my duties to fill up the debt
That runs to mortal ruin. Let them go—
I do not like them; they oppress my heart:
It has not room to breathe in them. Behold!
On this wave-welter'd shore, in wind and rain,
How freely beats the heart! how near it feels
To that in Nature beating! For I stand
Within the pressure of great agencies
That come by it impell'd. The broken heavens
Drag almost to the sea, and landward rush,
With terror stricken, like a routed host.

The waves, white crested, and with yells of war,
Pursue them:—one last dash at flying heaven!—
They only plunge and tumble on the shore,
Crest-fallen and disappointed.

But the roar
Comes most from yonder heads that bluffly stand
Knee-deep i' the sea, and sentinel the bay.
The rout comes round them, swept on wind and wave;
And hark! the storm's wild throat—too high for bass—
Has crack'd its voice upon them, and 'tis shrill,
Air-rending, as a trumpet. Not a sail,
Or any human shadow, moves within
That circuit of dim air and weltering sea;
But out beyond the curtain of thick drift,
How many well-reef'd barks and stout-braced hearts
Now stand at bay i' the storm! A lonely bird
That seems far blown and driven from the deep,
Hoary and sea-like, glides around my head,
And gazes into me with strange pale eyes—
Most melancholy eyes! Be still my heart!
And yet those eyes, how painfully near they come,
And those long spectral wings!—Why did I wince?
It put me in a circle, in a spell,
And shut all else from eye and ear. But see,
The lonely bird beats windward out of sight;
It's spell breaks, and again the welt'ring sea,
The trumpet-sounding cliffs, the wind and rain
Leap through these senses into me.—

O God!
We know not by what miracle the soul
Receives the outward world into itself:
But in such gleams of beauty does it come,
Methinks it is its spirit we receive—
In very deed 'tis Thee! God, give me work
In which my fitness and thy glory meet,

As in this vagrancy they seem to do,
Or as we see in the *commission'd* men,
And it shall have my knee, my hand, my heart,
My toiling days,—ay, and my sleepless nights;
Which neither toil nor weariness could feel,
With me the chosen one to do their work,
And Thou in all their hours. O grant me this!

The tempest has God's voice to day: I feel
My words are driven back into my throat;
The tide keeps frowning on me to go back,
And foot by foot it claims the beach; the wind
Takes the salt spray and blows it in my eyes:
My very thoughts are beaten back: the day
Seems all a driving back. O God of day!
Thou hear'st the faintest breathing of a soul
Rising through all the tempests. If that soul
Deem not the after stirrings come from Thee
As answer to console or to command,
But that itself creates them, it were well
To audience them as if they came from Heaven,
And soon they will approve themselves. For truth
Is not imagin'd; it has been with Thee
In all eternity; and when it comes,
It carries its own proof in needing none.

God takes unnumber'd tongues. The elements
Have bidden me to whence I came.—

You dream!

The outward fact was still the inward dream
Until men saw it clearly. All may see
Alike the face of things; but pierce the skin,
And seek their spirit with the inward eye,
Then who shall say to any one "You dream?"
As who can say the lov'd do not possess
That beauty which their lovers see in them?

The deeper truth to the intenser sight.
In things dissimilar to other eyes
The poet shows a likeness; then all eyes
Can see how like they are. Nor is his view
The final. There's a meaning in each thing
That fills all depths of vision up to God's;
And all are satisfied till vision deepens
And wants the deeper.

That which starts a thought—
If only by suggestion—*speaks*, since mind
Had, but for the suggestion, miss'd the thought.
And had not Nature first reveal'd her truths,
Mind were as empty as a cast-up shell,
With one eternal sound of vacancy.

I pray'd God give me nobler work! The storm
Straight seem'd to bid me back to that I left;—
And how God answers prayer, who shall say?
The duties which a man at any time
May find before his hand, are wholly his,
Though all the world cry, *How unlike the man!*
In them, or in the cause that made them his,
His double will be found, his inner self,
Whose outward haunting gives him never peace,
Till in fulfilment it find wholesome life,
Or rest in honest failure.—Wouldst thou find
Thy heart's elected work, pass through, not round,
The task that even error has made thine.
For in the midst of uncongenial toil
E'en by the way of doing it, a man
May raise the office that he longs to fill.—
No man may shape the world to suit himself:
But—form'd his own heart's model—let him work
At anything, and we shall see how soon
It draws about the man a fitting garb.

And this, or nothing, from the Day's rude throat
I could translate—this when my inward ear
Would listen—when it closed, the outward shell
Took nothing but the hoarseness of the Day.
And thus all things speak inwardly—they speak
Like oracles that seem to disappoint,
Because we take the outward meaning only.—
A King was prophesied, surpassing all
Earth's former kings in glory.. When He came,
No one believed the meek and lowly man
Of Nazareth, in very truth, was he.
So when we seek high missions, and are told
They wait us in the drudgery despised,
Who is it has the faith to find them there?

XIII.

I cry for rest! e'en cast a weary eye
Within a quiet grave, if then my soul
Might find a heaven of meditative rest.
And O for one, the humblest though it were,
Of all the sanctuaries of still life
That lie secluded in the restless age,
Inherited perhaps by an Abuse!
But here I pant and whirl from place to place,
Bearing these wretched samples of my wares—
Goods! goods transform'd to evils in my thoughts—
Plague-spots that fester in my very dreams!
Day after day, town after town—no end!
All days and places shuffled in a heap,
Each morn I need to search my jumbled brain
To find my when and where.

Yet in this whirl
I ever fall to momentary rest.
All peaceful things absorb me. In the stream
Of rushing cities I am often swirl'd
Into some grass-grown street; and, ere I know,
Shut from the buying, selling, cheating world.
Cathedrals with their quiet cloister'd yards,
Their soft wing'd swallows and their ancient daws,
Do with me what they please—make me a monk.
And if to straggling suburbs Business leads,
Some hedge-row, or a meadow's deeper green
Takes me beyond all business: or a well,
Sun-lit within the sombre of a wood;
A daisy folding on a bank at eve;
A rain-drop on a thorn; a sleeping tree.—
O peaceful, thoughtful rest! thee and a crust!
But thus to be for ever on the bound,
My sacred aims, and hoarded, unread books,
Heart-breaks, which not to know at all were bliss—
Gardens of honey'd beds in which my soul,
With joy could work away its busy hours.

But I repine at Justice—with the Right
Make faithless argument. What have I done
To gain or to deserve the envied place?
My life has been a wandering, broken waste;
A constant shunning of the beaten roads;
And in this wilderness of no results
I fret for those reach'd by the beaten roads.

Of opportunity and thoughtful rest
I mourn the want, yet use not what I have:
My evenings squander'd with contented fools;
Long nights in sleep, or for unneeded sleep,
Turning and moaning, and the morning light
Falling in vain on my sloth-blinded eyes.

O till that waste of time is all wrought up,
'Tis shame and squander'd breath to ask for more.
He ever drifts from opportunity
Who knows not to haul in the slack of time.
'Twere meanness to hold other than I have
If this be my deserving. If the yoke
Unfit me, let me feel its galling just,
And in the pride of Right lose my complaint.
The world is full enough of well-placed men:
They serve old ends, but give it nothing new.
An unshaped man put in their steads would bring
New ways, new thoughts to the exhausted spheres.
In my unfitting office I may find
What none else could, what nowhere else I can.
Why seek to do what is already done?
Or fill a place already snugly fill'd?
For ease—ignoble ease! O be thyself
And let thy office shape to thee, or cease.

Come then, my wretched budget, come my cross!
I'll kiss and bear thee on from town to town.
For thou art mine in being mine: by right
Or wrong, or fault, or weakness, thou art mine;
And till that right's wrought out, that fault retrieved,
That weakness strengthen'd, or that wrong made right,
I may not lay thee down. Come then, my cross!

XIV.

Scotland, my Mother, thrice I've left thy hearth
To seek my crust 'mong strangers—left each time
Alone, in sadness, never to return,
Yet, by some fate undreamt of, still return'd.

When shall this heart find an abiding home?
Alas! too many has it found—heart homes,
Lov'd spots where it has been, and fain would bide—
But none for me! Ah where the homestead, where
The kindred soil in which my tendrill'd years
Might spread and deepen on to rooted age—
Green shoots up-springing, and all things around
Engraven with my life, until they read
As pages of my history? But, no:
I see no dawn of that—blank dark all round!

Once more I leave the Doric land—this time,
A part that rings with glorious deeds of old:
Kyle's capital, made famous by the lives,
To Scotland dear, of Wallace and the Bruce,
And where even England's Cromwell graved his name.
But oh more glorious by the minstrel chief
Who sang of *Tam O'Shanter* and the *Brigs*,
And whose heart-warbled melodies have borne
The *seuch* of Coila's streams o'er all the earth.
O favour'd land, whom Providence has given
Not wealth of beauty only, but a voice
To sing it to the world—farewell, farewell!

'Tis but my lips that say that word, my heart
Bids no farewell, and could not if I would.
No: be my outward being where it may,
While memory, and thought, and Burns remain,
I live in Kyle. Still in the Summer eve
My soul will wander by the "*hermit Ayr*,"
At noon sit dreamily by "*bonnie Doon*,"
"*Brown Carrick hill*" fill all my waking dreams
With its mysterious beauty, and yon isle,
With *Goatfell*, framed in sunsets. Hill and dale,
And river, bridge and road where *he* has been,
Live in a double glory—in their own,

And in the light of that impassion'd eye:
For God who breathes the miracle of beauty,
Gives to the Poet the creative soul
That makes a beauty kindred to His own.

If not my first, thou art my dearest home.
And where my next? I leave, but whither go?
I blush to think there is for me no place
That begs my work; but, rather, that mere bread
May lead me like a beggar! Would my faith
In *missions* were confirm'd—that for each one
Throughout the ravell'd labours of the world,
His special work awaited him! I'd rise
Like morning, with hope's star upon my brow,
And feel earth beckon'd me. The world accords
Divine appointment to her greatest sons,
Who turn her destinies by arm or pen:
But wherefore not the least? In sight of God,
Who are the greatest? And what acts of man,
Little or great, most pregnant of results?
The flash that leaps from heaven fills all men's eyes,
But with amazement passes; while the spark
That falls unseen from some lone widow's lamp
May fire a city. Fields are won and lost,
Run red with blood, their thousands heap'd in death;
Yet in a little while are green again.
A lonely thinker gives the world a thought,
Which in due season overruns the earth,
Brings wealth to nations, bread to all that work.
A ten years' war rose from a woman's cheek,
A Reformation from a *cutty stool.*
The veriest act works an eternal change,
And none can tell the outcome.

All or none
Have special missions waiting them from God,
And here or somewhere in this endless life,

Must find them. None so worthless, none,
But like the obscurest artery performs
A necessary part amid the whole.
Not Shakspeare only, but the multitude,
Gave birth to Shakspeare's universal line.
So, Washington was but the brain whose strength
Drew upwards from the pettiest veins that beat
With Independence. Take the least away,
And Washington had not been Washington.—
God's thoughts are circles: lives, things, and events
That *we* deem useless, are the arcs which, join'd,
Make up the round.

Shall even the trees put forth
Each its appointed leaf and bloom and fruit—
The birds and insects live and build and sing,
All in their own unerring way, yet man
Be left to blind experiment and doubt?
They are God's slaves, and cannot err,
While man, you say, is free! Ay, so he is;
And therefore often misses his true end.
Yet is he only free within the bounds:
Error and wrong cannot be driven far:
On one side only is there endless scope,
And that is towards the right, the true, the good;
And he alone that is God's willing slave
Is truly free—yea, even free as God.

The conscience-beat of Right that stirs amid
The conflicts of the heart—this is God's will.
It bids us to our missions: we are deaf;
Or, hearing, heed not, and still live at waste,
In half successes, disappointing gains,
Failures and fears, that seek to whip us right.
Who thinks of missions? None. Yet even we—
You, I—might find our God-appointed work,
Would we but rise in His name and begin.

There ever is a Right, a Best to do,
Here where are, and now. In simple trust
Do that, and ever that, nor mind results.—
To make thy life an embodied thought of God,
Be it all failure in the world's loose speech,
That only is success—how done or where!

And whence the love of home, this heart for place?
Not from the dusky grandeur of the hill,
The clouding tree before the cottage door,
The haunting stream—no, nor the mantling hearth?
But that through them, unconsciously, the heart
Has caught the gleam of God; and that is *love*.
It is the very home of every soul,
And everything in nature is the door.

If we by thought, at any time, can pass
Into this all-sufficing mystery,
The soul's true home, then farewell all regret!
Be where we may, we are at home and peace.

XV.

The half of man's allotted term I've lived
In glorious idleness—in work that gave,
With bread enough, rich hours of rosy eves,
Of morns with dewy eyes, of bright blue noons;
And while my compeers moil'd as if their souls
Would leave them did they bate a single jot,
My foot would be afar upon the heath
With idle winds, or with the musing tide
Upon the lazy shore; and all quaint nooks,
Green lanes, old woods, lone tarns, and forest pools,
Knew me at most untimely business hours.

Wherever I abode my heart took on
The image of the place; it grew within
Like second nature, with a soft slow growth.

And then the sweet debauchery of books,
That led my soul into a trance of thought,
Without the rack of thinking!

Blessed time!
Of all that indolence and sloth could yield
I drank my fill; and though I often dream'd
The hand of stern necessity had snatch'd
My golden leisure, and made me a slave,
I had no faith in dreams, and still delay'd
The nobler use of leisure:—to reclaim
The wastes of mind; to bring from the unknown
The trophy of a thought; to give men's hearts
The thrill of some new beauty; to restore
The ravel that impatient hurry breeds;
To break down all oppression, and declare
The universal brotherhood of man;
To seek God's mystery, to breathe new life
In dead beliefs, and bring to fretful hearts
The heaven of peace that rests alone in God.

Alas for precious leisure—precious now!
Now that my portion is the hour cut off
From needed sleep, the moments from a meal,
The blessed seventh day, for which thank Heaven,
Though friends in loving kindness take it all!—
Alas for leisure! I have none! The hours
Come how'ling round me, mad with work, till oft
I can but stand and look them all at bay:
But no—there's no abeyance—one by one,
Singly they must be taken, or I fall.

Moiling and toiling from the dawn to dusk—
Toiling and moiling in the blinding gas!
'Tis hard to work with only hands and brain,
Without the heart to help—the heart that longs
To bring its own lov'd work within its reach.

The hours like noisy carriers bring their loads
And heave them down before me, then are gone,
Uncaring for the care they leave behind.
The beat of brain within, the haste without,
The unceasing, surging roar along the streets,
The noisome vapours, and the stifled air,
With all the heartless seeking after gold—
O! memories of green and quiet fields,
But I am tired of this!—My only peace
Is not my own, but second-hand—it comes
In looking at repose:—the week-day church,
Within the rails so placid, while without
Is Babel; or the massive pillar'd hall,
That puts to shame this littleness of haste,
And with its big thought slows the passing foot;
Or Age—contented, almost vacant, age—
Sunning itself upon a garden walk,
Amid the hive of streets; or even the glimpse
Of idle alehouse scenes—fat easy men
On benches, in a canopy of smoke,
And drawling out stale sentences 'bout nothing.

But why complain? I've had my share and more,
Though, like a foolish child, I've raked the sweets
Into the few first bites, and left the rest
Untempting, tasteless, to a stomach cloy'd.
Alas, had I but known! the plain hard fare,
Without the sweets, had rear'd a stouter heart.

My life has fed on lonely idleness,
With varied wanderings by land and sea,

And now this daily treadmill round of work,
This constant smother of my own idea,
And feeble working out of thoughts not mine,
Kills all the man within me.—O! to be
Again let loose into the untamed life,
Free of restraint, and vagrant as the wind!

The wind itself—the free wind—moves in chains:
Within increasing circles freedom rules:
God's mystery, Necessity, bounds all.
Our highest freedom is to do the right,
As clearly and as stoutly as we may,
And wheresoe'er that leads us, still 'tis well.

Heaven knows that with my present eyes I see
Wrong turnings at all stages of my life:
But did I *then?* Each seem'd my one best road.
Who knows but that it was, that while it led
To disappointment, the expected good
Was gain'd in heaven's own way. So in this slough
Through which I swelter, heaven alone can tell
What buried treasures lie. The school-boy's task,
Which seem'd his penalty, becomes in time
His strength and blessing. In the world's great school
Our lessons are as little understood,
And even more abhorr'd. But ripening time
Brings fruit to all. What though the many die
Unblest by the fruition? If we pass
Like sunrise onward in eternal day,
A time will come for all; and who may know
What tasks and trials now do best prepare
Each for his unknown sphere. The dead dry rules
Of language that seem'd worthless to the youth,
Are to the man the wings of living thought.
And so the work of life that seems mean toil,
Transform'd, will soar hereafter.

And so ends
My sorrow in philosophy. But shall
My hope of high achievement also end—
My life-long hankering after work in which
Head, heart, and hand might join, and I tame down
Into an unaspiring useful tool?
Is fine ambition vain, save when the act
Comes with it? And unwrought deeds seen afar
In the despairing night, are they false stars?
If so, where be our guides, since life's dense fog
Lies all before us, our next-step unknown?—
O! trust thy best ideal, cherish still
The glory that the young heart burn'd to reach.
It was not there for nothing: work and wait.

Though hard necessity of daily bread
Drive in another path, and fate and chance
And weakness all combine to cramp the hope,
Still *think* towards the achievement. Living thought,
Like Nature, works all things unto its ends,
And uses up what cannot be opposed.
None ever reach'd his heart's goal in the way
Himself plann'd or desired, but in God's way;
And when 'twas reach'd, he saw the hindrances
Were steps whereby the ascent was overcome.
In lives and rivers the impediments
Give each a voice peculiarly its own.
Be mine the brave endurance of a stream,
By countless barriers turn'd off from my course;
Yet, after toilsome windings, still come round
Upon my lov'd intent—my seaward way.

XVI.

* * * * * * * *

THE BLEAK BEGINNING OF NOVEMBER.

When the year fell damp and cold,
Long the nights and short the days,
And the forest's fallen gold
Trodden in the mirey ways;
Cloud-drifts trailing on the ridges,
Moorland rivers swollen and brown,
Lone birds from the dripping hedges
Seeking shelter near the town:
Quite forgotten summer's rays,
Closed we round the glowing ember,
And deem'd the cosiest of our days
The bleak beginning of November.

List'ning to the beating storm,
And the wind up in the vent—
Without so cold, within so warm,
Hearts so full of deep content.
Reading legends in the ashes,
Telling tales that charm and move,
Looking underneath long lashes
To devour the eyes we love.
Eyes are closed and hearts are still'd;
But 'tis given me to remember
The more than summer light that fill'd
The bleak beginning of November.

THE NIGHT'S UNRULY.

The night's unruly, rude, unruly;
It will neither hold nor bind.
Every *airt* has sent a wind;
They grapple as they meet,
And pierce the air with shrieks of pain,

Worrying the timid rain,
The rain with plashy feet.
It is a night of terror truly,
Out there in the street.

Wild beasts in the chimney growling,
Spirits wailing in the lock:
We cannot hear the ticking clock
Beside us in the room.
Our very hearts have ceased to beat,
And pause as if they paused to meet
The coming crack of doom.—
Blithe fire, how the poor night is howling
Out there in the gloom!

JOHN FROST.

The arch-eyed sun stands in the east amazed
To find the earth white-sheeted like a ghost,
The russet-mantled earth on which he gazed
Last eve, and had no thought of thee, John Frost.
How busy thou hast been all night, John Frost!

Thou hast been in the woods, and with a breath
Still'd all their swaying limbs: transform'd they stand,
Stone giants, held by the enchanted death
Of Eastern tales: majestically grand
The silence they are keeping in the land!

Thou hast been on the hill and in the glen,
And garrulous rocks that held a dripping speech,
Now dumbly sit like ancient graybeard men,
Peering through rheumy eyes, each into each,
Their language quite escaped beyond their reach.

Thy mystic foot has been upon the lake.
Like a sea monster on dry land, it lies
Pow'rless, and wond'ring crowds come round and make
A marvel of it, gazing in its eyes,
And walking o'er its back in wild surprise.

Thou hast been in the lanes and quiet nooks,
And playing like a breath about the meads,
Over the moonbeams. Thou hast set the brooks
To winter music, and bedeck'd the reeds
With strings of milk-white coral and crystal beads.

Thou hast new strung the air, John Frost, and things
That had no voice for music find a note.
Most delicate sounds come sweeping like birds' wings,
Or on the sea of blue air gently float,
Lisping as 'twere the rocking of a boat.

The roads across the country seem to speak,
And tell us of the carrier's heavy wains,
Long miles before they come: a jolt, a creak,
Anon the airy sweep of tinkling chains,
And still the beat of hoofs on far-off plains.

Earth, air, and water have proclaim'd a king,
We treat him as a knave, and call him Jack—
Misfortune of a too familiar thing!
A heaven of freshness if we would not lack,
We must be born anew, or wander back.

Old Habit serves us well, but we have sold
A kingly birthright for it. It has cost
Uncounted times its worth in life's best gold—
The mystery of common things all lost—
The king, the very god, in thee, John Frost.

THE FOG.

And is this day or is it night
That is neither dark nor light?

Day is dead and laid in fog—
Nothing but the fog we see,
The fog and our own breath;
Nothing hear but the night watch-dog
That howls in time of death;
A raven croaking in a tree,
And a robin in the loaning
Weeping out a mournful ditty.—
All the earth is full of pity:
Surely it has ceased to work,
It is so deeply hush'd. Yet, hark!
No, no—it is the deep sea moaning—
Nothing from the city!
City, village, upland steading—
All are buried in the gloom,
Each within a breathing tomb.—
Alike from outer life are hidden
Lowly cot and lordly seat.
The garrulous road, the hedge that lay
Along the pad, our very feet
Are spirited away.
Wrapt in cloud, on solid land
We do not seem to stand;
But in a mazy heaven each man
Glides, horizon'd by a span.

This is neither day nor night
Call it what we may,
It has lost the spirit Light,
And is but the ghost of Day.

LATE SPRING.

Spring is with us by the sun,
Yet he has not given us one
Little snow-drop to remind us
That the flowery days are near.
For the winds are blowing chilly,
And the firstling of the year
Slumbers with the sleeping lily,
Their coverlet the sere
And sodden mortcloth that old Autumn
Lay with on her bier.

Spring is with us by the date,
And Winter cancell'd: yet we wait
Balmy fingers to unbind us,
Roots and budlets to unfold.
But the herald larks are roaming
Up the heights of blue and gold:
They can see the Spring a-coming
While we sit in cold.
Hark! they sing to Him who taught them
Notes so sweet and bold.

WITHERING LILIES.

And must ye pass away,
Yellow waving lilies?
Greener grow the woodland alleys,
Greener, greener every day;
Summer's coming up the valleys.
Yet ye will not stay!

I come at morn and even,
This green bank my cushion,
And I worship in a fashion,

From the lilies up to heaven:—
God accept my earnest passion,
Be it rudely given!

I bless the time of flowers,
And kneel with each new comer.
My heart's a temple all the summer,
Visited through all its hours,
Quired by every little hummer
Of the leafy bowers.

THE QUESTIONER.

O speak, and tell me, pretty flower,
How you get your beauty's dower—
Those tints so delicately fair
You in your sunny bosom wear,
Those lips so chaste in form and hue,
That eye of most celestial blue,
And this delicious breath that blends
So divinely with the air—
Your very spirit that ascends
In a never ceasing prayer!

Lip so chaste and breath so sweet—
Lip and breath have no replying.
Living beauty at my feet,
In its very beauty dying!
I can only gaze and ponder
On an everlasting wonder.

Yet, list! it speaks!—Yea, we inherit
A spirit-ear—it speaks in spirit:—
"Praise God—be joyous for the power
Of seeing beauty in a flower,
And for the still repeated *No*
Unto thy question, *How we grow.*

The beasts beside us in the field
Know not our beauty, neither start
Unanswerable thoughts; we yield
No stir of wonder in their heart.
And so they die; but thou shalt not—
Even by virtue of the thought
Thou see'st can be accomplish'd never.
Thou, a questioner for ever
Of the still receding *Yea*,
Needs must have eternal day!"

NEAR DUNBAR.

Here Cromwell stood that dark and frowning night,
Hemm'd in upon this desperate tongue of land,
The sea behind, the sea on either hand,
And, fronting him, the foe on yonder height.
What chance for Cromwell in to-morrow's fight
If thus the order of the battle stand!—
He was but captain, the supreme command
He knew was His who to the most lorn right
Oft gives mysterious victory. And so,
Arm'd with this faith, of fear he never dream'd.
For ever with that man a Power there seem'd
That conquer'd first the judgment of his foe,
Then gave an easy field. So will it be
With all who own as deep a trust as he.

LILY.

Little Lily, darling Lily,
  Lily with the golden hair!
Folks will think me very silly,
  But I'll cry and let them stare—
Cry and let them think me silly,
Now I journey far from Lily.

She is but a tiny maiden,
  Idly playing on the hearth;
I a man with bosom laden,
  Laden with the cares of earth.
Yet all cares I can unladen,
Save one for this little maiden.

She is like a hoarded treasure—
  Joy of joys when in our eye;
Out of sight a fearful pleasure,
  Lest our winged riches fly.
Riches is a sorrowed pleasure,
Absent from my little treasure!

Why should Absence weep for Lily,
  Whilst in thought we are so near?
Ah! we only know the silly,
  Partial meaning of a tear.
Tears! O do not think them silly,
They are crystal'd thoughts of Lily.

TO A SPARROW IN THE CHURCH.

Why come within the temple, little preacher,
  To break the sanctities with noisy bill?
Art here not as a learner but a teacher?
  Speaks Heaven in notes so dissonant and shrill?

We listen to the deeply labour'd sermon,
  And hearts applaud, though heads as many nod;
Half comprehend, but nothing well determine:
  Thy startling chirrup takes us straight to God.

For thou from long-strain'd art dost nothing borrow;
  The same shrill notes at first in Eden given,
Come through the centuries, making thee, poor sparrow,
  The more immediate minister of Heaven.

THE DAWS.

Awake thee, awake! kirk bells give warning—
Rise and enjoy the Sabbath morning!

The Sabbath is a day to drowse,
And sleep will stand me another turning.

But hearken! the *Daws* fly over the town,
Some clear, sharp, airy notes come down;
And they switch away, with arouse! arouse!
Come and enjoy the Sabbath morning.

Soon, soon in the open street I stand:
God's silence lies o'er all the land—
Silence and beauty everywhere—
In those unfathomable skies,
And in the city as it lies
In folds of soft and sunny air.—

The morn has lit the golden vanes,
The sun burns in the eastern panes,
The smoke of newly-kindled fires
Hangs blue about the gleaming spires.
The city's roar is hush'd, the humming
Country to the city coming.
A mild low bleat runs through the street
From some far-off upland farm;
The cottar's cow lows in the croft,
Our dingy lanes repeat the charm.

Sweetly on Sabbath morning speak
Things unheard through all the week:—
The swallows chittering on the eave
A fluttering ditty ere they leave
In ecstacy the air to cleave;

The house-top sparrows in the street,
Chirping among passing feet;
Unfelt winds singing in the tree
Almost imagined melody;
The gray fly buzzing on the wall,
And many voices sweet and small;—
But the *Daws* are lords of all.

Where the morning smoke is curling
And becoming viewless air,
See the merry black-coats whirling—
What a heaven of joy is there!
Not a single drop of care!

Cawing o'er the blacken'd tower,
Cawing round the gleaming spire;
I have watch'd them many an hour,
And my heart would never tire
A-list'ning that discordant quire:—
Discordant! No; the rudest note,
The simplest strain from Nature's throat,
Has its own chord, all full and clear,
Deep within the spirit's ear.

Ah, whither would'st thou, fervid spirit,
Panting through thy day of strife?
The universe thou dost inherit,
And eternal life.
The very winds, the skies that shine
In glory yonder, all are thine;
Thine by that mysterious law
That strikes a chord almost divine
Between thee and the worthless Daw.

Chased by the phantoms, Ambition and Death,
Slacken thy pace and take thy breath;
Tarry and let them go by;

And know, for as much as they seem to claim,
Ambition will surely miss his aim,
And Death as surely die.

Unbend thy brow from thoughts of pelf;
It is a dream, and abides no waking:
Thy greatest treasures are thyself,
And Beauty and Truth that wait thy taking.—
For after all the toil and pain,
And coffers fill'd, where is the gain?
The beauty of my lord's demain
Makes me its lord. The city lying
In a golden lair of morning air,
With those black wings above it flying,
Is trulier mine than his that draws
The rents, but does not know the Daws.

Cast off all fears of a dismal day
When Death shall reduce thee to senseless clay.
The earth can only take its own,
And death is but a marble stone.
But man is link'd by living thought
With God and the great eternities;
He is unending as the skies,
And needs not fear for aught.

Then what need'st thou but largely live
All thoughts and things that from the Giver
Issue through the great For-ever?
O! there is time to work and pause—
Good time for all, yea, even to give
A Sabbath morning to the Daws.

FOR THE CENTENARY OF ROBERT BURNS.

The world is old! States, Empires, Kings,
Have risen, ruled, and pass'd away;
Yet David harps, and Homer sings,
And he of Avon speaks to-day.

The living song will still abide;
And when our age is dust in urns,
The world, as now, will own with pride
Its life-long debt to Robert Burns.

His touch was universal birth;
He set his native streams to tune;
And every corner of the earth
Knows Nith and Lugar, Ayr and Doon.

His homes we seek, his haunts we trace,
Wherever thought of him is found;
We follow him from place to place,
And all is consecrated ground.

On things that disregarded lie
His look bequeath'd a priceless dower:
The trodden daisy caught his eye,
And blossom'd an immortal flower.

Love's tender throes with him became
A sweet religion; and he pour'd
Such floods of beauty round a name,
That all men love whom he ador'd.

The patriot-hero's brows he bound
With wreaths eternal as the sun:
The lowly honest man he crown'd;
He made the king and beggar one.

For well he knew that *Lord* or *King*
Was but a word. With deeper scan
He made both peer and peasant sing
Their highest title still was—*Man*.

In "shooting folly as it flew,"
There never was a deadlier aim;
And even those his satire slew
Are joint partakers of his fame.

He lash'd the bigot: his the creed
Embracing all humanity;
A conscience clear in word and deed—
One Father, God; and brethren, we.

And if we blame the sparkling rhymes
That made the maddening cup sublime,
Think only of the alter'd times,
And give the censure to the time.

In humour, friendship, pity, worth—
In themes that change not with the day—
Broad nature, felt o'er all the earth—
His genius holds unmeasur'd sway.

Great Prince of Song! to mark thy fame,
O, for a moment of thy pen!
'Twere needless pains—thy living name
Is written on the hearts of men.

Our gilt makes not thy gold more bright;
But hearts enrich'd would yield returns:
A world of homage meets to-night,
And every thought breathes ROBERT BURNS.

THE WOODLAND TEMPLE.

ELIZA.

We have stray'd,
Unconsciously, into my favourite grove.
'Tis one of Nature's temples, built of elms.
This little path, amid the grass, that leads
Nowhere, but still returns upon itself,
These feet have worn, for none comes here but me.—
Would'st know the service of my leafy church?

JANE.

Ay. Be it e'er so simple, e'er so rude,
I doubt not even Heaven will lend an ear.

ELIZA.

Three times a day, at morn and noon and even,
Do sweet religious bells call me to prayer.
First, at the gray and earliest wink of dawn,
The mellow-throated blackbirds of this brake,
Send soft devotional peals along my sleep;
And when I waken into real thought,
'Tis not like tearing from a blessed dream,
But a continuation of the dream,
For still the soft peals come. Then I arise,
And, stepping forth into the morn, behold
The sun at orisons upon a bank
Far in the east, and with his lowly beams
Clasping the whole earth to his loving breast.
The grass, the hedges, yea the rankest weeds
So dazzle with the saphire dew, that earth
Seems all a paradise, whose very dust
Is pearls and precious stones.—The dimpling well
That laves the entrance to this hallow'd grove
Receives my first obeisance. There I drink.

Pure water is the symbol of pure life:
The morning draught should be a daily pledge;
And inasmuch as 'tis the God-given wine
That comes direct from Nature, so we reach
The immediate Presence, even by that thought.
It is the ruling feature of all things,
And that which makes each kin to all, that we,
By passing into them, still come to God.
What can we more beyond the Eternal Thought,
Which in itself is sermon, hymn, and prayer—
The sole heart of my service? So I pace
This quiet sward to find it; and when found,
It is the inaguration of a day
On which all things go heavenward: the birds
Sing hymns, the flowers in sweet odours pray;
The herd boy's whistle, and the mower's song,
With sound of sharpening sythes, seem all to ring
Of innocence and Eden.—I return
To household duties, to a simple meal,
And find the consecration on them all.

JANE.

And this your matin service! But I see
It's all *thought* service. You should give, I think,
At least *one* voiced hymn to the morning; thus:—

O morning with thy star divinely fair—
  Thy hope before thee in the east ascending,
Come to our cushion'd earth, God's footstool, where
  Immortal hearts are bending.

We have high hope as thou for brighter day—
  The hope in heaven, the action still aspiring:
We are, like thee, beclouded on our way;
  But not, like thee, untiring.

Teach us thy steady and unwearied way
  To higher excellence; thy regularity;
Thy patient strength throughout the adverse day;
  Thy universal charity.

Give us thy young heart, never to feel old,
Though years pass from us and have no returning;
Since out of death, our night, we shall unfold,
And rise like thee, bright morning!

ELIZA.

The thoughts are good, and wonderfully sung,
Considering how untunable the measure.—
I would augment my service with a hymn,
And have a heart for music; but my ear
Is spoil'd, I think, with living near a wood.
Therefore I'll leave that part to you.

JANE.

Describe
Your noontide service then; and if a hymn
Arise by nature from it, I shall sing.
All song should *seem* spontaneous, if 'tis not.

ELIZA.

At noon there is a brief bar of the day,
In which all Nature, even Time, doth rest.
Few know of that, for in this rushing world,
Many divinities of daily presence
Are passed unseen. It is the merest span—
Yea, to the onward harmony of time,
'Tis as the *rest* in music. Yet, thus brief,
It is, of all the day, the very break
For heavenly thought and pray'r.

A little while
Before the dial points to noon, I seek
The bank beneath yon leaf-beclouded elm,
Amid whose branches is a little world
Of green and gold and flickering beams, and bees
Whose tiny pipes keep up a honey'd drone,
Awaking thoughts of fairy-land. And there,

On that imaginative bank, I watch
The climbing day, the pant of Nature. Soon,
The larks drop singing from the clouds, and quench
Midway their song, as falling stars their light;
The little drones up in the slumbrous tree
Sing smotheringly and cease; the lisping brooks
Grow deeper throated, hum a quiet bass;
The sunny winds lie down outside the woods.
Anon, the Day takes his last upward step,
And, on the golden pinnacle of noon,
Stands still to breathe, one breath, before he turns
With meek brow down upon the western vale.
That breathing was the time—a pause too brief
For anything but thought, for thought enough
To reach the inner sanctities of heaven,
To reach them and return on wings of pray'r.—

The day moves on again. Ere you can note
The start, each little cloud has broken out
In lark notes, and rains music. In the woods
The winds have entered on their gleaming wings,
And leaves are in a flutter of delight;
My canopy, the tree, is in full blast,
Its hives of bees have tuned their honey'd pipes.
So Nature's organ with its myriad stops
Plays me from church, dower'd with a glimpse of heaven

JANE.

Somewhat indefinite service, is it not?

ELIZA.

I do not know; but if it be, 'tis well—
You have the greater license for the hymn.

JANE.

When Nature rests at noon and seems
To tarry on the endless path,
'Tis not the faintness of her beams,
The love of ease, the rest of sloth.

For oft it takes no stronger will,
No deeper life to *do* than *be*;
So is that quiet Nature still
The all of good and fair we see.

The ocean deeps drink in more heaven,
At peace within their molten calm,
Than when on high and tempest-riven,
They shout their grand impassion'd psalm.

Nor is that calm a stagnant ease;
The tides hold on to ebb and flow,
And thoughts are passing in the seas,
Which only God may truly know.

When hearts have cast up sin by sin,
And know the tranquil joy of rest,
There will be peace as deep within
The fathoms of the human breast.

Spare me your comments and proceed to eve.

ELIZA.

When day is burning out, there in the west,
And leaving but its embers, red and black;
When gloaming loans ring with the throstle's pipe,
And sing the day's good-evening to the night;
When daisies sleep and blue-bells do not ring,
Labour at rest and lovers whispering,
I to my bosky temple come again.—

It is the hour of falling dews; the soul
Has its own dew of thought, and then it comes
Divinely from the stars: that bright lone one,
Venus, amid whose beams Love loves to stray,
On whose excess of beauty poets thrive;

And all the unnumber'd lesser beads of light
That break out on Night's Ethiop brow like sweat,
As up the dark he labours; and the moon,
That beauteous lunatic who dotes on Night,
Hangs on his skirt, lies in his breast, falls out,
Then turns her back and leaves him, till some days
Of cloud and weeping bring her back again:
Yea, all that walk the eternal rounds of space,
On what Gods-errand we shall never know:
Yet while their unknown message speeds, or hearts
Live on their waste, the dewy light they spill.

My evening service has a starry cast—
A glare of moonshine in it, you will say,
And vacancy of space: but save that star,
The *Conscience*, whose fine light the fumes of hell
May dim but not put out, which pure hearts know
To be the very life of God in us,
I know of nought that leads so straight to God
As those fine wonders which the skies beget.—
To think of *space*, to know it has no bound,
Nor *could* have, needs a mind like space itself,
Eterne, with but illusionary bounds.
The mind once born to illimitable thoughts,
Must live them through illimitable time.
They could not enter in a mind that ends.—

O wilderness of silence that lies out
Beyond the glimmer of the farthest star,
Or in whose unimaginable deeps
There is no end of stars! our wings of thought
Not long sustain their flight through thee, but flag
As thy horizon ever more recedes;
They fail, and we, the living souls of thought,
Should fall like plummets from the spheres of flight;
But the divine necessity of God

Is round us, and receives us, and we find
Answer and rest more blessed than we sought.

In all my services a thought of God
Is still my full amen: I can no more.
In very truth we need no more; for that,
Breathing the soul of everything, supplies
The very soul of all our life's deep wants.

Parent of heaven and earth and moving things!
By whatsoever name with us, or none;
However dimly reach'd, whom yet we know
To be the soul of life, the heart of love,
The essence of all beauty, and the power
Whereby the planets roll and dewdrops fall,—
O grant that we may know Thee more and more,
Not as the past and future God, but *now*
And *here*, on plain unconsecrated ground!
We grandly see Thee in the unfrequent storm
That rends the woods and cracks the quarried rocks!
O may we know Thee in the simplest air
That gathers odours on the thymy banks,
And cheaply brings them any summer day!
We meekly say the thunder is Thy voice;
And e'en philosophy, 'mid causes lost,
At last takes up the thought. So may we know
That voice as Thine which in our wilful hearts
Whispers the simple truth, the honest right.
Then knowing it is Thine, may it command
Our ready act, however dim the end!

JANE.

Amen. The *conscience* is indeed God's voice;
It cannot be out-reason'd; therefore 'tis
The reflex of a higher mind than ours.
As well earth burn the sun out with her fires,
As we by argument put out this light.

ELIZA.

See! Evening, with the eyelids almost closed,
Looks through their long dusk lashes, half in dream,
And passes softly into deeper sleep.
Sing us a hymn and then we'll go along.

JANE.

Day pass'd from earth, and sky and cloud
Laid him in a golden shroud:
Tears, sad but beautiful, were lying
On the earth when Day was dying.

When our course is run, O may
You and I be like the Day—
Not die but with accomplish'd duty,
And pass amid increase of beauty:

Then, when lost to mortal sight—
Lost in blank imagin'd night,
Our places vacant, friends repining,
We, like Day, elsewhere be shining.

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